THE LEARNING CIRCLE

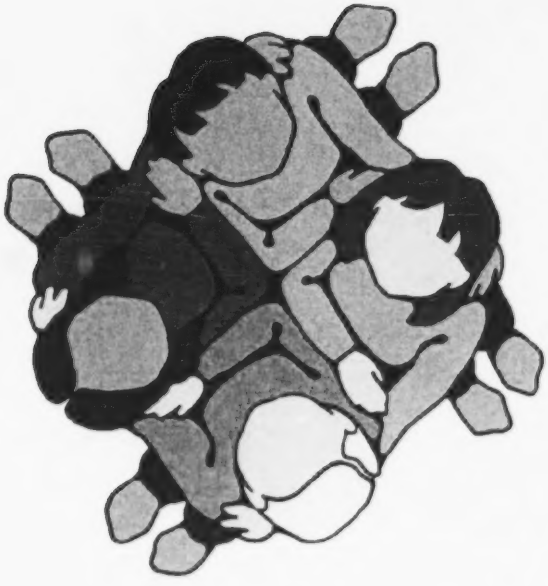
FIVE VOICES OF ABORIGINAL YOUTH IN CANADA

A LEARNING RESOURCE FOR

AGES 14 TO 16

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

Canada



Published under the authority of the
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development and Federal Interlocutor for
Métis and Non-Status Indians
Ottawa, 2007
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca
1-800-567-9604
TTY only 1-866-553-0554

QS-6224-000-EE-A1
Catalogue No. R72-278/4-2007E
ISBN 978-0-662-46167-8
©Minister of Public Works and
Government Services Canada

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre :
« Le Cercle d'apprentissage : Cinq voix de jeunes Autochtones du Canada, destinées aux jeunes de 14 à 16 ans. »

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those individuals without whom this resource would not have been possible. This document is the product of an extensive consultative process involving educators and experts in education, as well as those with an expertise in First Nations and in Inuit culture and history, from across Canada. Special thanks are extended to Professor Jon Bradley of the Faculty of Education, McGill University who co-ordinated the efforts of the writing team, Leonard Dent who co-ordinated the review team and Blair Stevenson who co-ordinated the educational activities and shepherded the project through its early drafts.

In addition, recognition is also extended to the following individuals for their efforts and dedication as reviewers, writers and advisers:

Susan Ball, Curriculum and Social Sciences Branch, Nunavut Ministry of Education; Elaine Bergh, Educational Consultant, Fort Qu'Appelle; Shawn Bernard, Consultant, Mi'kmaq Services Division, Nova Scotia Ministry of Education; Mary Cree, Teacher, Kanesatake; Valentina de Krom, Director, Office of First Nations and Inuit Education, McGill University; Gail Fairbank, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, McGill University; Betty Ann Forward, Teacher; Renee Gillis, Teacher; Ann Marie Kraft, Teacher/Librarian, Gitlakdamix; Joe Kirman, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta; Keith Lickers, Education Officer, Ontario Ministry of Education; Kevin May, Nunavut Arctic College, Nunavut; John Mazurek, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto; Caroline Mueller, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, McGill University; Abigail Ostien, Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, McGill University; Allan Patenaude, Faculty of Education, McGill University; Gail Saunders, Curriculum Branch, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education; Helen Settee, Aboriginal Division, Manitoba Ministry of Education; Donna Lee Smith, Office of First Nations and Inuit Education, McGill University; Greg Smith, Teacher/Librarian, Oliver; Douglas Stewart, Teacher, Montréal.

Finally, we offer special thanks to those 15 unique and anonymous Aboriginal youth from across Canada who so freely gave of their time in providing background information for the narratives which anchor this project. Their candour, reflections and insights helped to frame this work.

INTRODUCTION

PRODUCTION PROCESS

Five Voices of Aboriginal Youth in Canada is the product of a series of 15 interviews from five different Aboriginal communities across Canada—three youth in each community. The interviews, conducted by a team from McGill University, were tape recorded and then synthesized to produce five narratives, each drawing accurately from the three youth responses to the interview questions in that community. Following this, an educational team created a selection of education activities to complement the narratives, and a number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal experts in education and in First Nations and Inuit culture reviewed the document. Before finalizing this written resource, it was also reviewed by panels of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth and by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators to gauge the effectiveness of the material in terms of cultural accuracy, youth engagement, readability and potential for acquired awareness. The suggestions and comments gathered from these panel reviews were then incorporated into the original document to generate the final publication.

AIMS AND FUNCTION

As an interdisciplinary, student-centred educational unit, this document is designed to enhance the understanding of non-Aboriginal students regarding issues and realities facing First Nations and Inuit youth today. The depth and complexity of the issues, history and cultures of First Nations and Inuit are not completely presented in these narratives. It is recommended that educators and students pursue and investigate additional resources to deepen and broaden their understanding. A wealth of information exists about Aboriginal peoples in Canada; however, be wary of outdated sources. Current resources for further exploration are included within the narratives and the activities, and are listed at the end of this document under Resources.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The educational activities in this booklet meet many of the aims and goals of provincial curriculums for Aboriginal studies. The material has been designed for Grade 9 and 10 students, but can also be applied at other grade levels where Aboriginal studies and themes are taught.

The Suggested Activities section uses the five Aboriginal youth narratives as a springboard for exploration by high school students based on specific learning objectives. Students will be able to:

- Understand Aboriginal peoples' relationship to the land.
- Understand Aboriginal perspectives regarding self-determination and self-government, based on historical and contemporary realities.
- Identify some challenges facing Aboriginal youth in Canada and suggest how these challenges might be addressed at a personal and community level, and by provincial and federal governments.
- Develop an understanding of current issues and historical biases that affect Aboriginal youth.
- Identify and compare similarities and differences between Aboriginal youth in the north and south of Canada.
- Identify and compare similarities and differences between Aboriginal youth and youth in the rest of Canada.

NARRATIVES

The following five Aboriginal youth narratives (three female and two male) are generic, having been created by combining the responses of the three youth in each of the five communities into one, representing that community. The youth ranged from ages 14 to 16. The narratives are constructed as transcriptions and have been left as true to the responses as possible while maintaining confidentiality. As a result, these narratives can be used to explore, discuss and research the complex issues that affect First Nations and Inuit youth.

Each narrative is based on the same set of interview questions and, consequently, the flow of the narrative reflects the framework created by the questions. The Appendix lists the questions posed to each teen. Note: The generic narratives that follow are based on comments by youth from four First Nations and one Inuit community. These communities were selected to provide a cross section of Aboriginal youth from the geographic regions of Canada. Since not every First Nation or Inuit community could be involved, the following narratives represent only a few of the very diverse Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It is important to remember that *Five Voices of Aboriginal Youth in Canada* is not intended as a comprehensive compendium of either First Nations or Inuit cultures and values but, rather, as a starting point for dialogue between teen peer groups. It is also important to note that the ideas, beliefs and opinions represented here are those of the individuals interviewed and should not be construed as representing a particular First Nation or Inuit group.

1. KATERI (FROM A MOHAWK COMMUNITY IN QUEBEC)

Kateri is my name, and my personality pretty much matches my name, which means nature. I love being in nature; in the summer you can never find me inside and I rely mostly on myself. For me, nothing can come close to the feeling I get when I'm by myself, outside on the mountain or down by the river. I'm 16 and people think I'm a party girl, because I like to go to the parties down by the river, but I'm really more of a dreamer inside. I can also be a little too direct and opinionated sometimes, and then I feel bad afterward.

I was born here on the reserve, and I live with my mom and stepdad, two younger sisters and like a million cats. One of my sisters, Onwari, is crazy about cats and seriously has about 10 of them. She's almost 15 and even though we're different in some ways, we're pretty close. She's a bookworm and you can find her either reading or playing with all those cats. As a family, we get along OK. We have our ups and downs like any family. We talk a lot and argue sometimes over dinner. My mom is from here, but my real dad is French Canadian. We did have a relationship, but that's another story. My mom's family is pretty traditional and they all speak Mohawk. My mom stays home with my youngest sister, and my stepdad works at a factory.

I go to the high school here. On a typical weekday I get up (I'm late for school), go to school, come home, eat something, do homework, watch TV or go to friends' houses sometimes. It's pretty much like that every weekday. I like my school, but it would be better if there were more students. I mean, maybe not better for our education, but it would make it more interesting. I used to go to the youth centre a lot when I was younger. It's only open on the weekdays though. My mom wants to talk to the band council to ask them to keep the youth centre open on the weekends, so Onwari has somewhere to go besides her friends' houses all the time.

On weekends, I like to go to the river or the mountain (well it's more like a big hill). There are some great views from there. We get there by driving on a four-wheeler. And sometimes, there are parties down at the river that some parents think are too wild! Then I sleep in too late on Saturday. Typical teenager I guess. Some parents don't allow kids to go on four-wheelers or to the parties at the river, but my mom lets me go. She knows that I know how to take care of myself. In the community, there's also an ice rink and gym. There's not too many other places to go though.

I baby-sit my cousin's kids on the weekends too. I like kids, even if they can sometimes be annoying. It's fun to take them outside and play in the snow with them. We visit my mother's side of the family. Onwari especially likes that. She's more of a homebody than me. She and Grandma like to sit and watch TV and movies together. Me, I'd rather be outside ice fishing or on a snowmobile in the winter. In the summer, which is my favourite season, I'm never inside. I love the sun. Usually, I invite people to the pool. We also go to the beach, go boating, play football, swim, play volleyball and do stuff like that. Some kids like to drag race and drive around on four-wheelers too.

Our culture is very important to us, especially to the Elders.[1] I don't think it's as important to the new generation. They don't realize how important it is. I do though. I wish I'd learned more about my culture when I was younger. I've already lost some things I used to know, like the language.

Our language—Mohawk—is really important to the survival of our culture.[2] I used to speak Mohawk when I was younger, almost fluently, because I went to a Mohawk immersion school. But then I switched schools and focussed on French and lost Mohawk. My father, who is French Canadian, really wanted me to learn French. Now that I am old enough to choose my culture, I choose my Mohawk culture. Right now, I only speak a few words of Mohawk and understand some of what the Elders say to me. It's very important to know what the Elders say since they are trying to pass on the culture, like the beliefs and values. Most of the Elders are fluent in Mohawk. My grandparents speak it and my youngest sister does too, since she is in a Mohawk immersion school. I wish now that I could speak it. I wish I hadn't lost it, because I want to teach my children the language. It's who I am. It makes me sad sometimes, because then I think that if this is who I am, then I don't know enough. Hopefully, I can learn it better someday.

I think that fighting for our education is worth it. Education is important, so you can get a job easier and get somewhere in life. Seeing as it is my second-to-last year of high school, I see myself continuing to go to school. As for my friends, well, that's their decision, not mine. My goal as a student is to continue school and go into law. My teachers said I'd be good at it, because I like to argue a lot! I'll probably travel back and forth from my community to go to school. I plan on remaining in the community after I graduate. I want my children to be raised in their culture, knowing what and who they are. It's funny; even though my sister, Onwari, is the one who seems like the homebody, she's also the one who thinks she won't always live here. I'll bet that when she has kids she'll change her mind and come back. Maybe living outside our community isn't what she thinks it will be.

Also, sometimes I wish there were more cultural activities with the whole community, so younger people can participate in dancing and singing. The last community activity was two summers ago. Right now, there's not enough money to deal with issues in the community. We need more money for education. It's a big problem, because they need to teach more about the culture. Cultural events teach us who we are. Also, there's not enough to do around here. More recreational and cultural programs would help youth stay out of trouble. There's some youth here who are in a lot of trouble. They'd be occupied if there were more cultural activities, and it would help them to have more self-respect if they knew who they were.

Note: All URLs in this Learning Circle text were confirmed in March, 2007.

[1] The term "Elder" is used to describe older people in a community who are given respect as leaders and knowledgeable people for the entire community.

[2] To hear some words from the Mohawk language, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/5070_e.html.

I want to continue the Aboriginal culture when I have children but, sometimes, I worry I won't know enough. Our generation is what the next generation is going to look up to, and if the generation before us doesn't teach us our culture, then how will we pass it on? The younger generation pushes aside our culture and it's not right. Some people think we're going to lose our identity; we're being overpowered by the non-Aboriginal culture. I think we need to bring back the language, traditions, dances, socials and stuff like that.

I did learn some things about my culture from my school. I learned Mohawk songs and dances and how to make rattles.[3] Also, my grandparents know a lot about our culture. It's like they're a big book or something. I really admire them. They pass on some of the values Mohawks consider the most important, like being generous, kind-hearted, responsible, thankful, loyal and honest.

One of my favourite things about my culture is how we're taught that everything on the Earth is to be respected. It's an important part of the culture and covers everything. That includes respecting yourself. For example, if you asked me who the most important person in my life is, I would say myself. I don't mean to sound like I have a big head, but if you can't respect yourself, then who will respect you? Respecting yourself is one of the most important things my culture has taught me. Also, the land, water, plants, air and animals are all very important to our culture and need to be respected. Without any of it, what would we be? My grandmother says that even in our dances, we show how close we are to Mother Earth. She says that, as women, we should never lift our feet when we're dancing the ceremonial dances. She says our feet should always be touching Mother Earth.

The land is so important to us that we were even willing to fight for it. In 1990, there was a big crisis, now called the Oka Crisis,[4] because some white people wanted to take more of our land—land that was sacred to us. It happened exactly where our school is now. I was very little, only three years old. My mother and grandparents told me about it. You hear a lot about it still in the community. I don't remember much, but I do remember bits and pieces of it. One of the soldiers during that stand-off asked me to state my name, but I wouldn't, because he was a soldier from the other side—the enemy soldier I guess you could say. To be honest, I don't consider myself to be a Canadian. I'm a Mohawk.

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[3] Some rattles are used for ceremonial events and others for social dances and ceremonies. The first rattle was probably made from hickory bark, and then from the horns of buffalo. As buffalo became scarce, cow horns replaced buffalo horns. Horn rattles are used today for ceremonies and social events, while gourd rattles are used only during ceremonies. For more information, go to www.cradleboard.org/curriculum/index3.html (go to Akwesasne Rattle Making)

[4] Throughout the summer of 1990, armed Mohawk warriors clashed with Quebec provincial police and eventually the Canadian Armed Forces when officials tried to dismantle a roadblock installed by a group of Mohawks from the community of Kanesatake. Protesting the expansion of a local golf course onto sacred lands, they had constructed the barricade in March of that year. Mohawks eventually voluntarily left the barricade in late September. The Crisis brought to the attention of the Canadian government and the people of Canada the need to address long-standing grievances of Aboriginal people surrounding issues, such as land claims settlement and living conditions. For more information, go to http://archives.cbc.ca/300c.asp?id=1-71-99.

If a non-Aboriginal person wanted to learn more about us, they should ask a real Mohawk what we're like. I don't think non-Aboriginal Canadians know much about our culture, because they see all sorts of things that aren't true from TV (like the media and cartoons), movies and books. They're judging us from stuff that's made up. Either they think that all we do is sell cigarettes and all sorts of things, or they think we're still living like a long time ago.

It's good to learn about other cultures. A non-Aboriginal person might want to learn about how we live and what we're like. We're not that different. Yeah, we're different in some ways, but we're all people. Maybe they'd like to know our traditions and how we cope with everyday life. We don't get everything for free, and we struggle, especially for education. They should realize that we're real people. Non-Aboriginal people learn about how we used to live, not how we live now. We live in houses not teepees; we wear clothes, not leather. We work. Don't believe everything you hear about us.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have pretty different ideas of what community means. Aboriginal people see community like a big family and it's really important to us. Everyone knows everyone and we trust everyone—pretty much. In non-Aboriginal cultures, it seems like people only feel like that with their own families. We're a very small community here, but we know who we are and we know everyone that's around us. For myself, I'm used to my community. It's where I grew up.

I have a lot of opinions about our community. (I told you I'm opinionated!) Overall, I really like my community, but that doesn't mean we can't make some things better. I don't pay so much attention to politics, but I do think the band council doesn't listen to the community enough or focus on the community's needs. The band council is not completely self-governing now, but if it was, it shouldn't be only them deciding. To me, self-government means the power to decide the important decisions and laws controlling our community. The community needs to choose what's best on its own behalf. Without us—the community—then what's the point of having a council? That's the way I look at it. We also need better leaders to be role models for everybody, especially for the youth. They're trying though. Good leaders in our community would be people who are in touch with their community and listen to the Elders and the youth to hear everyone's opinion. They would be kind, well-educated, have self-respect and most of all, be honest.

If someone came to visit us who was Aboriginal, but from a different community, I'd show them the differences between our community and theirs. If they were a non-Aboriginal person, I'd introduce them to someone who knows how to speak Mohawk. I'd also show them the scenery—the water, land and pines. It's really beautiful here. If they were my age or a little younger I might also take them to the youth centre.

After everything I've just said, I think that for us as Mohawk, if we don't fight back for what we know and who we are and really learn our culture, then we'll become non-Aboriginal. It's slowly happening now. More and more people don't know what they represent—what it means to be Aboriginal. For me, I would like to know my culture, who I stand for and my roots. There are a lot of cultural things I don't know. For example, I lost my language. I don't know as much as I should know about who I am. As long as we have our language though, then the land is ours. Like the Elders say, if we lose our language then we've lost who we are, what we represent. It's like we're giving up everything or slowly we're giving up. I'm not going to give up.

2. CASSIE (FROM A MI'KMAQ COMMUNITY IN NOVA SCOTIA)

Hi, my name is Cassie and I live in a Mi'kmaq community in Nova Scotia.[5] I think I'm pretty normal, but then again I don't think non-Aboriginal people know a lot about us Mi'kmaq.

The reason I know this is because they treat us differently. Somehow, I think they feel we do things really differently for some odd reason. We're not part of popular culture, but they get a lot of ideas about us from the little we are in the news. Things like our treaties and our fishing rights have been on the news a lot. People have been upset about that, so I think they get their opinions only from a few sources. They don't know the whole truth. If a non-Aboriginal person does something bad, it's not on the front page of the news, but if someone from a different culture does it, like us, it's all over the news. They think we're all bad.

In the history books, you don't hear much about Mi'kmaq people. Even at my school, non-Aboriginal kids assume things about us out of their own ignorance. They think that we're rowdy and we're only out to make trouble or something. They get it from their parents, because there were a few bad apples that used to go to this school and they probably had experiences with them, and just built everything up on that. The people who do know us in school know that we're good people and that we share a lot of things. There should be more Mi'kmaq involvement in the schools, more teaching of the youth about the Mi'kmaq people in general, like teaching them what we do. We just need more good people to speak out, because I know a lot of ignorant ideas are going through people's heads. We need to take more action, to speak out more.

I was born in this community 16 and a half years ago. My mother and father moved back here right before I was born, because of my mom's job and also some money problems. We lived with Gram and Grandpa for the first few years. Now I live with my dad, my stepmother Marie, my sister Joanne and two of Marie's kids, Henry and Julie. Julie is 14 and both her and my sister, Joanne (she's 13), have attitude problems now. So there's a lot of arguments, because they're around the same age—and teenagers—so they like to argue. Henry is 15 and we get along OK. He's kind of a quiet kid.

My dad and Marie have been together for a long time, so Henry and Julie feel like my brother and sister to me. Marie also has two older kids who don't live with us anymore. One lives in Boston and the other one, Angie, lives on the reserve and has a family of her own. As a family, we all get together on Sunday and have a feast. We talk about our week and what's going on in our lives. We also talk a lot when we all get home from school and work. My dad and stepmom ask us how our days were, and if it went well or not. That's something we do every night.

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[5] Although youth featured in this document live in smaller communities outside of cities, a growing number also live in urban centres across Canada. The experiences of urban Aboriginal youth vary; some remain strongly connected to their Aboriginal communities while thriving in an urban centre, some are part of a vibrant urban community, while others experience feelings of isolation from a lack of support and services and culture shock. For more information about urban Aboriginal youth contact: USAY – Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth, 1511-10th Street SW, Calgary, AB, T2R 1E8, Tel: (403) 233-8225, Fax: (403) 233-8756, www.usay.ca/. To access archived webcasts with Aboriginal teens from across Canada, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/connex/.

I go to the local high school in town. I try to wake up around 6:00 or 6:30, but I don't really hear my alarm clock until 6:45! I get up, get ready and my bus comes at 7:25. My school is only about 15 minutes from the community. Right now, I stay after school for driver's education classes and when hockey starts up I'll be spending even more time here. Last year I was tutoring after school; it was kind of like my job. I usually try to do my homework first after I get home from school, because I usually have everything that I learned at school still in my brain. After supper, I call my friends or jump on the Internet sometimes. I usually go to bed at 11:30 on school nights but, if I could, I'd go to bed earlier. I barely have any extra time to go out during the week and, if I do, it's already around 10:00. On the weekends it's different. I rent movies or have friends over to watch TV or go for a walk in the neighbourhood. I usually go to bed around 1:30 or 2:00 and get up around noon. Usually during a Saturday, I'll work on my projects if I have any, finish my homework and stuff like that, chill out, watch TV. At night, I'll often baby-sit, because my godmother works all night and so I baby-sit for her.

Sometimes, I baby-sit for people who want to go out drinking. I also go to my stepsister, Angie's house sometimes—she's cool—or just hang out at my house. (I mean, why leave your house when you got everything in it?) I also like to walk in the woods, because it's quiet and you can get away from the world. My brothers and sisters and I used to play baseball a lot on the weekends, but not anymore.

I think the most important place in the community for me is our church, because I'm a Catholic and whenever I see a symbol of the cross it makes me feel safe. There's not too many places to go around here. There's the community centre, but that's not much. We don't have a youth centre or anything like that, just the gym. The gym is not very interesting though; I just sit around and watch people play. Some of the kids here break the windows or do break-ins, and it makes me mad that they're destroying things that everybody uses. We also go to some of the other Mi'kmaq communities close by a lot. Some of my relatives also live up there. If we get out of town, we usually go to other reserves or we go to play bingo!

My father is the most important person in my life. He guides me. If I didn't have him, I don't think I'd be here right now, like in school and on track and doing things I do now. He gives me a lot of support. I also look up to my stepsister, Angie. She's a good person and a role model for me. She doesn't do any drugs and has got a good head on her shoulders. Angie and I sit around and talk sometimes about when we were younger and laugh about it, like when the family would take trips to Prince Edward Island. My godmother is definitely important to me. Things that I can't talk about with my stepmother, I can talk to her about, because my stepmother and I aren't really that close at all. It's hard talking to her. Do you know what I mean? My godmother, though, is really patient; she'll put up with me! My aunt (my mother's sister) is like a second mother to me and treats me like her daughter. Another special person for me is a girl I baby-sit. She's five, and I've known her for her whole life. She used to call me mommy. She kind of keeps me grounded. Like, if I have an urge to do something not good, I only have to remember that she's around and I want to be a good role model for her.

Maybe the reason why I have so many people actively involved in my life has something to do with our culture. We see community sort of as a family; it's not really one person raising a child—it's everybody, the whole community. Everyone tells you what to do and what not to do at an early age. My stepmother says that everybody knows everybody, so everyone is keeping an eye on each other's children. It's true that I do feel safe in my community, because I know everybody. You feel connected. Most of the adults get along, and you know they're there for you. So, we're close-knit. It's not just a place where people live, but a place where people help each other out and do their best for one another.

Being supportive and generous is a big part of what makes a good person in our community. Like if someone needed something, a good person would give it to them. Also, a good person would have respect for everyone, especially the Elders, and listen to what they have to say. They would do their best to give back to the community. In non-Aboriginal communities, I don't think everyone associates with everybody. It seems like people keep to themselves a lot. I think we're closer as a community than non-Aboriginal people would be. It means a lot to me, because it's where I grew up. It's where some of the best things in my life have happened. All of the memories I have are from my home community.

Some of my strongest memories are the funerals. I don't always know the person who died, but I'll remember the people crying. A funeral is different here compared to other communities I think. There's a lot more understanding about death and familiarity with it. Even little kids know what's going on; know at a funeral that someone has died. When there is a death, there would be a wake and then people would come and give food to the family, clean the house for the family or even give money to you if you needed it. A wake is when someone comes home for the last time (the body) and the body would be prayed over and the family would be there to say their last good-byes and see the person for the last time. We would stay for three days at the most during a funeral. I'm more comfortable at a wake in the community than I am at a funeral home; it makes you feel more comfortable. The community is really close in a spiritual way. If something happens in the community, it's like a domino effect that everyone feels. I was a friend with someone and he died. We went to his funeral and I remember standing at the casket. Another time that I remember was my mother's funeral. My mother died when I was six.

Another memorable event I remember was the Labour Day weekend baseball tournament. All of my family would be there. My whole family played baseball when I was growing up. It's like I was born on a ball field or something. My grandfather was alive then and he would take care of the ball field. Other teams from other Mi'kmaq communities would come. I remember how the ball field was packed with cars and there was no room to walk, no where to sit. People would sit on their blankets on the lawn. As I got older, year after year it kept getting smaller and smaller. Now

they don't even have tournaments anymore. It's the same thing with the powwows.[6] I remember my first powwow when I was seven. I was dancing. We don't have powwows here now though. I don't know why. People stopped coming down. They were fun, because we used to go to them all through the summer. We still go to powwows in other communities. Sometimes, I take part in the activities, but other times I like to sit back and watch all the dancers, drummers and kids playing around, catch people smiling and just take it all in. In the summer, we head down to Maine during the blueberry harvest. We meet new people from other reserves and get to learn more about them and where they live. There's other reserves down there that hold powwows so you get to see how things are done in Canada and the United States.

I also go to a lot of workshops about our culture. I went to one last summer that was a week long. They taught us about the medicine circle[7] and herbal medicines,[8] and we built sweat lodges[9] and stuff like that. My godfather is a very spiritual man—a medicine man. I learn all about the other spiritual realm from him, because he's really into his medicines. If I'm sick, like if I have a sore leg, he'll give me something for it like herbs. I think powwows and "sweats" are an important part of our culture. I'm learning more as I keep going to them.

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[6] A powwow is an important First Nations gathering and celebration. In addition to being a time to meet up with friends and relatives and make new friends, powwows also feature singers who help provide the rhythm for exciting competitions in dance and drumming. Powwow practices vary somewhat across North America, but all dancers wear beautifully designed regalia to compete in a number of different dances, such as the Grass Dance, the Fancy Dance, the Traditional Dance, the Fancy Shawl Dance, the Jingle Dress Dance and the elaborate Hoop Dance. There are also inter-tribal dances where both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants dance together.

The powwow is designed around the circle, an important symbol in many Native traditions. The drums are positioned in the centre, representing the heartbeat, and the dancers and audience move and sit around them. The concessions and camping add another layer to this circular pattern. As dancers enter the circle, negative thoughts, animosities and jealousies must leave their minds to generate a safe and sacred space. Elders have a special seating area and are attended to respectfully. The powwow is a chance to celebrate the rich heritage of First Nations and simultaneously educate non-Aboriginal visitors. For more information visit www.powwows.com/.

[7] The medicine circle or medicine wheel is a rich, multi-layered symbol that represents creation and holds many of the traditional First Nations teachings. In physical appearance, the medicine circle is divided into four quarters, with each quarter a different colour. (The colours vary from nation to nation.) The colours carry meanings involving the different races of humanity, the cycle of the seasons, the four directions and much more. Beyond these initial representations are layers of teachings about the importance of all creation, the interconnectedness of life and the many cycles we experience during our lives. For more information, go to www.saulttribe.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=40&Itemid=150.

[8] Aboriginal peoples have always known about the use of roots and herbs to heal illnesses. Many of today's prescription drugs and other pharmaceuticals, such as aspirin, originally extracted from willow bark, are based on herbs traditionally used by Aboriginal peoples. When Europeans arrived in Canada, First Nations provided them with medicinal knowledge that eased the impacts of diseases and, in many cases, saved lives. Nations such as the Mi'kmaq continue to hold knowledge about herbal medicines, and medicine men and women provide consultations on the appropriate use of specific herbs and roots.

[9] Sometimes referred to as "sweats," the sweat lodge ceremony is a traditional ceremony for spiritual healing. The sweat lodge is built outdoors in a special place, constructed from wood, usually willow, and covered with blankets. There are specific ceremonial procedures for building and orienting the sweat lodge which vary from nation to nation. Rocks, which are granted special respect and referred to as grandfathers are heated in a fire outside the lodge and carried to a hole dug out at the center of the lodge once hot. Combined with water poured onto them, the rocks generate heat and steam for the ceremony while participants gather sitting in a circle surrounding the stones. It can become extremely hot inside, hence the name sweat ceremony. For more information, go to http://bearspiritvision.com/sweatlodge.htm.

I don't speak the Mi'kmaq language now,[10] but I'm trying to learn that too. It's like we're Aboriginal, but we Mi'kmaq don't really know our language. It's important to know, because it's our language. When we go out into the rest of the world where there's not a lot of Aboriginal people, it's not going to be any help to us, but I'd still like to do it. It'd be more helpful to learn French as a second language (even though I don't know French either)! I take a Mi'kmaq language course in school and, sometimes, I try to pick up the language from Gram, but she speaks too fast! I do my best to answer her back. I feel kind of awkward around the Elders, because they try to speak Mi'kmaq to me when we go to Maine and I feel bad, because I don't speak Mi'kmaq, so they have to speak English to me. I don't feel like it's right. I should know how to speak it. The language is important, because Mi'kmaq people are important people—we're good people—and the language is an important part of our history. We're still Mi'kmaq without our language, but it's like a big piece isn't there, a link to our culture.

Another part of our culture is the land. The land gives us somewhere to live and it's just a big part of us. To be honest, I would say it's not something I think about every day, but it's important to our culture. The Elders especially feel a strong connection to the land. The animals give us food, and plants can sometimes give us medicine. Being Mi'kmaq also means we get certain rights to hunt and fish,[11] because of the treaties we've signed. It makes me feel good that we have those rights. We have to make good decisions about the land and the environment. Basically, the decisions we make now are going to affect the younger generations. I think about the kids that we're going to have and our grandchildren, and wonder what kind of place they will grow up to live in and whether or not it will be safe. I don't want them having to grow up worrying about boiling water before they can drink it.

I think that if people don't start speaking up and changing bad things, things are probably going to get worse. If we don't start making things better, there'll be more alcoholics, more drugs, more debt for sure. If I could, I'd take all the drugs and alcohol away. The older people use that stuff and the younger ones see them doing it, so they think it's OK. Drugs lead to things like neglect and abuse. Also there's too much violence. It's destructive and there are people who are hurting all the time. There should also be more guidance and activities for youth, but there never seems to be enough money to go around. We need more houses, a better school and things just need to be fixed.

The leaders don't seem to do anything about it. If the leaders were doing their job, they would know how to communicate with a lot of people, especially the Elders. They would know what happened in the past and could listen to the youth, because we represent the future. They would be responsible, kind, have good schooling and know how to deal with politics. I think what's most important though is to be passionate about helping people and really care about the welfare of people.

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[10] To hear some words from the Mi'kmaq language, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/5050_e.html.

[11] Treaties signed between First Nations and the British and Canadian governments before and after Confederation provide for certain traditional rights, including hunting and fishing rights. At times a controversial issue, hunting and fishing rights provide Treaty Indians with the ability to hunt and fish for personal use within the means of conservation without the regulation of the federal government.

I think things would be better if we were self-governing, because then the money would be shared among the families who really need it. To me, self-government means the power is in your community. That would be better, because I think the government doesn't really know about what we need. (I'm starting to feel a little bit like I'm in social studies class!) I know what the government did in the past; they said where we had to live. I know that we're not treated equally now, because I can feel it. We're all Canadians and we should all be treated equally. Like if you walk into a place and you're the only non-white person, you can just feel the tension. Non-Aboriginal people need to be exposed to who we are and what our culture is. They don't really know us, as people, as a culture, as a nation. They're a little confused. So hey! Get to know us!

I see myself going to college and working. Getting an education is important so you can get ahead in life. I want a good job. Maybe I'll be a politician so I can change what people think. If you want to be anything and not live off of social assistance, you're going to need an education. Nowadays, you need to finish Grade 12 just to pick up garbage. I can see some of my friends going to college, but others, I don't mean to judge them, but you can tell by how their family treats them, that the road they're heading on is not a good one. Those ones are a little mixed up right now, and some don't go to school and don't seem to want to do anything.

After I finish university or college, I will return here, because my family's going to be here, but not to live—at least at first. I feel like some of the people who are here aren't getting anywhere. I want to explore the world, see what's out there. It just seems like we're excluded, put away in the corner. Everyone knows we're there but no one comes to see. They're scared to come to our reserve, and I want to see how it is to be like everybody else for awhile. I might return someday so I can help the community.

I really want to be a counsellor, not a band office councillor, but a counsellor who people can talk to, especially kids. I want kids to be able to come and talk to me for help and support. I think some kids witness too much; they're exposed to too much as children, and they kind of lose their innocence too young and it's hard for them to talk to their families about it. I want them to be able to come to me. My message to them would be to stay strong. They're going to have to deal with the choices they make now for the rest of their lives. So, they should start to really think about what they're doing. Even if they don't think there's a way out of their problems, they've got to know they have the power to change things. They don't have to sit back and let it happen. Stand straight, stand tall.

3. SIMON (FROM AN INUIT COMMUNITY IN NUNAVUT)

My name is Simon and I'm 15 years old. I live in Nunavut.[12] I've lived here all my life, but I was born in Yellowknife because all pregnant women from our community are flown down to Yellowknife, 500 km away, to have their babies. We don't have a hospital here, so all babies in my community are born in Yellowknife.

I live with my dad, my mom and my little sister, Maureen. My dad's name is Thomas. He's a good hunter. He takes me out hunting a lot. He also works for the municipal office fixing their vehicles. My mom's name is Bessie and she works at the elementary school as an Inuktitut[13] language teacher. And my sister, well, she's my little sister! I joke around with her a lot.

I go to the high school here in town. I'm in Grade 9. I've got lots of classes: English, social studies, math, but I think my favourite is *inuuqatigiit* class. It's our Inuit culture and language class. We learn about reading and writing Inuktitut and we also make Inuit stuff like drums,[14] harpoons and *qamutiik* (a sled we pull behind our snowmobiles).

A typical day for me would be get up, have a shower, eat a quick breakfast of cereal and then go to school. School is pretty much the same most days—classes, come home for lunch, go back to more classes. Something different we just had at school last month was a health fair. Students were presenting projects on things like STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) and the community nurses were there handing out free stuff like condoms, posters, food and prizes.

After classes, I usually go the school gym and play sports. I just made it on to the high school basketball team. One of the RCMP officers coaches us. We're practising to get ready to go to a tournament in Cambridge Bay where we'll play against other communities in the region.

After dinner, I have to do homework and, sometimes, I go up to the school gym to play sports again and hang out. The gym is just about the only place to do stuff in the community. There's usually a sport like volleyball, basketball or indoor soccer up there every night. There's really nowhere in town where kids can go to hang out. I've been to other communities and they've got arcades with video games.

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[12] Nunavut is the Inuktitut word for "our land." Nunavut spans two million square kilometres to the north and west of Hudson's Bay and up beyond the tree line to the North Pole. The territory of Nunavut was created April 1, 1999 as the result of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

Land claims are different from treaties. A land claim is a "comprehensive claim." Claims deal with rights and title to lands that have not already been ceded by a treaty. There are two classes of claims: comprehensive claims and specific claims. Comprehensive claims have a wide scope and include land title, fishing and trapping rights, and financial compensation. Specific claims pertain to specific grievances First Nations may have regarding the fulfillment of treaties and the administration of First Nations lands and assets under the *Indian Act*. For more information on Nunavut, go to www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/ or www.itk.ca/. For information on land claims, go to www.indianclaims.ca/

[13] To hear some words from the Inuktitut language, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/5020_e.html

[14] The Inuit drum, *qilaut*, was traditionally used to celebrate, entertain, tell stories, settle disputes and help induce trance states. It was an important way of communicating, and still acts as a symbol of the beating of the heart. The song a person would sing while drum dancing is called an *ajaaja* song. Everyone has their own unique *ajaaja* song about their own personal life experiences. Originally, the drum was made from driftwood and caribou skin with seal or walrus skin surrounding the handle but, today, contemporary materials are primarily used to make the drums easier to care for and store.

I usually sleep in late on the weekends and then go and hang out with my friends. Sometimes though, I go hunting with my dad. When we go hunting, we have to pack up our sleds and get the gas the night before, and then we have to get up really early. It usually takes a few hours of driving on the snowmobiles to find the caribou. Then, once we've shot them, gutted them and tied them on the sleds, we drive back. It's usually a long day of work by the time we get home.

Sometimes, our whole family goes out camping. I don't think it's like camping down south. Camping for us means that we all go out on the snowmobiles and sleds. My mom and sister sit on my dad's sled and I drive my own machine. We bring a tent, food, stove and other stuff so we stay out overnight for the weekend. In the summer, we use four-wheelers to go camping. We spend a lot of time also at our cabin during the summer. It's a small cabin along the coast about a day's boat ride from the community. We sometimes spend a few weeks out there fishing and hunting. My dad is the one who taught me how to hunt. It's always great to spend so much time out on the land. Last summer, we were together at the summer cabin with my mom's sister's family and with my best friend Jacob. I think I would get bored if I was in the same community for the whole summer.

My dad, my mom and Jacob are the most important people for me. My dad's important, because he teaches me stuff, like how to hunt, how to skin a caribou and where to shoot them. I look up to my dad, because he's a good hunter. He knows a lot about the land and about the animals. He knows where to look for them and how they live. I look up to him, because he has these skills and he teaches them to me. He's a good teacher. He knows how to deal with challenges. My mom is important, because she gives me good advice. I guess they both give me good advice, but my mom always helps me with my problems and with homework. My friend Jacob is important, because he's my best friend. We do everything together.

Jacob and I go to the gym a lot. We go there to play basketball after school and on the weekends. I guess we also have the arena for hockey too, but that's only got ice in the winter. I play left defence on a community team during the winter. A third place we go is to the stores. Lots of kids hang out outside the Northern Store or Co-op. Those are the two main stores in town, but they have all kinds of things—everything from food, to stereos to clothes.

I'll always remember the time when an arctic sports tournament was held in our community. It was a couple of years ago and was for people from all over the region. The tournament is about playing arctic sports which are all Inuit games,[15] like the two-foot high kick, the one-foot high kick, the knuckle hop, ear pull—there's lots of Inuit games! I like doing arctic sports, especially the one-foot high kick. You play it by running up to kick a little stuffed toy seal that they hang from a string attached to a stand. You have to jump from two feet, kick the toy seal with one foot and then land on that same foot without falling over. It's hard to do!

[15] Traditional Inuit games and sports continue to be practised today. Inuit sports were designed to develop concentration, endurance, strength and power—all qualities needed for survival and hunting. Today, Inuit sports are played in schools and communities across the North and featured in the annual Arctic Winter Games. For more information, go to http://kativik.net/ulluriaq/Nunavik/inuitlife/teenagers/inuitgames/ or the website of the Arctic Winter Games www.awg.ca/.

My language, Inuktitut, is a big part of Inuit culture and of being Inuit. Playing Inuit games and drumming are some other things. How to hunt and sew are also important, I guess. I'm part of a drumming group at school. We sometimes perform for special events in the community. I learned most of that stuff from my dad and the Elders.

Every time I talk with an Elder, I learn stuff. I'm always learning new Inuktitut words from them. The Elders also come to our drum dancing practices and teach us things about the dances. There are so many different kinds of songs and dances.[16]

We speak Inuktitut at home most of the time, although we speak a lot of English at school. I speak both English and Inuktitut with my friends. Some of my friends don't speak Inuktitut that well. I think it's really important to speak Inuktitut, so I can learn my culture and speak to the Elders. Most Elders don't speak English very well, so you have to speak Inuktitut to learn from them. I think it would be good to be bilingual and speak Inuktitut and English. I think it's really important to know your culture. For me, that means being a good hunter or knowing how to sew. I go hunting a lot for caribou, seal and birds. I think that hunting and being out on the land helps me to maintain my culture. I also have my Inuit language and culture class in high school. That helps too. The environment is really important, because it supports the animals and us. We eat things off the land, and it's important that the environment stays clean. There's more and more pollution up here and that's not good for the animals. People say pollution gets into the animals we eat. We need to keep the environment clean so we can still keep eating caribou and seal.[17]

Good people would know their culture well and provide for their family, like having a good job or being a good hunter. They would also have to respect their Elders, their parents and their peers. It's really important to respect the Elders and do things like get groceries or ice for them. A good person also wouldn't drink or do drugs. Good leaders need to respect and listen to the Elders, and should know both Inuktitut and English really well. They should also not do drugs. It's important that they're a good role model. I guess they would have to find some way of getting jobs up here. I think a big challenge here is that there needs to be more jobs. There are lots of people without good jobs in the community, and a lot of young people are going to need jobs soon too.

It's really important to finish high school so you don't end up with a crappy job. I think it really hurts you if you don't finish high school. Most jobs now say you at least have to have a high school diploma and also you need to be bilingual in English and Inuktitut. There are kids in this community who skip out of school. I think they should finish school. I hope I finish high school and then go on to some kind of college in a few years.

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[16] Drum singing and dancing are a significant aspect of Inuit culture that binds the Inuit peoples of the circumpolar region together, reminding them of their common ancestry. Many songs have been passed down along several generations. In contemporary times, the tradition was close to extinction as a result of Christianity's stance on traditional spirituality, but more and more young people are taking an interest, and young Inuit artists now perform traditional songs and dances internationally.

[17] For more information on northern contaminants and pollution in the arctic, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ncp/ or www.ec.gc.ca/science/sharedgifs/bmay00_e.pdf.

I really want to become a pilot. I've been looking into pilot schools, but there's only a few in Canada. I'd have to go to places like Moncton, New Brunswick or Calgary, Alberta if I wanted to study to become a pilot. I guess I'll have to move away from here for a few years to do that. I think a lot of my friends will have to do the same. Maybe some of them will still be in high school in four years! I'd like to live in Nunavut when I'm older, but I think I'm going to have to move away for awhile so I can go to university or college, especially if I go to pilot school. I don't think I'll be able to just stay here if I want to have a good paying job. Although, I really like hunting, so if I want to be able to hunt I'm going to have to find some way of living and working here.

Nunavut is our territory and there's mostly only Inuit that live here. So, Inuit are the ones who have been elected into the government. To me, self-government means that Inuit are in control of the government.

A lot of southern Canadians think it's really cold up here. They probably know about the darkness during the winter. Some of them might think we still live in an *igluvigaq*[18] and get around with dog teams![19] I was actually down in Ontario a couple of summers ago and we were driving in a taxi. When the taxi driver found out we were Inuit, he asked us: "Do you live in igloos?" I bet most southern Canadians get their ideas about Inuit from TV or movies. They probably only see the stereotypes of an *igluvigaq* and a dog team. I think more people should come up here to see it for themselves. We have a different language and culture in Nunavut, so that's different than down south. It's still part of Canada, and I bet most Canadians never see the arctic. I live in Canada, so I'm a Canadian. I live in Nunavut and Nunavut is just as much a part of Canada as anywhere else I guess.

I think if people wanted to know more about Inuit,[20] they should come up here to visit and see Nunavut for themselves. We've got a totally different language up here and a different culture too. There are lots of things that are similar like the TV and southern food, but I think they should see the land. It's so different from the land down south. If you came up here to visit, I'd take you out on the land. Maybe I'd take you out by the big lake south of here and if you came in the winter, I'd take you on a sled and let you see how cold it is. I'd give you some tea when we got there of course—to warm you up! I'd make sure you had some warm clothes too. Maybe we could go on my snowmobile to some places on the sea ice and go hunting for some seal. I think it would be good for you to see the land up here.

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[18] *Igluvigaq* is the correct term for a traditional snowhouse, which many people know as an igloo.

[19] Today most Inuit travel by snowmobile during the winter and four-wheelers, trucks, canoes and boats in the summer. However, only decades ago, many Inuit travelled using methods they built themselves. A *qamutiik*, a wooden sled built without nails, was pulled by a team of dogs harnessed to the sled with ropes. Today the *qamutiik* is still used, but it's usually pulled by a snowmobile.

[20] Inuit communities are located in a number of places around the world, in addition to Nunavut, for example, Labrador and Northern Quebec in Canada, Greenland, Alaska in the United States, and Siberia in Russia. These Inuit also speak the same language as Inuit in Canada, Inuktitut. Inuit around the world are all represented by an organization called The Inuit Circumpolar Conference. For more information, go to www.inuitcircumpolar.com/.

4. HEATHER (FROM A CREE COMMUNITY IN SASKATCHEWAN)

I'm 16 and my name is Heather. My mom gave birth to me in Regina, but I've lived in this town all my life. I live with my mom and dad and my little sister who's nine. My mom is half Saulteaux, half Cree and my dad is white. My mom is a teacher on another reserve and my dad owns a restaurant in town.

I go to school here in town. I get up around 6:30 or 7:00, depending on my mood and am usually at school by 8:15. I play basketball or volleyball until 9:00 and then I go to my classes. I go out to lunch with my friends. After school I baby-sit my sister, watch TV and then, when my parents come home, we have supper and talk about our day. After supper, I sometimes meet my friends for coffee and then come home, do my homework till 1:00 and go to bed. On Friday night, I usually go out with my friends to a party somewhere. If there's drinking, then I might drink a little too, but if my parents knew, they'd be pretty mad. At some parties, people might be doing drugs somewhere—it's usually marijuana as far as I know. I've tried it, but I didn't really like how it made me feel.

On Saturdays I sleep in, then in the afternoon, I usually go to Regina with my family and shop for groceries, go to a movie or the mall or just visit people. I don't have my licence yet—I wish I did though! On most Saturday nights, I just hang out with my friends at one of our houses or go to a party, if there wasn't one the night before. I sleep in again on Sunday and just lay around the house or maybe go to the ski hill if it's winter.

Our family usually goes to church on Sunday nights. Going to church is probably the most important activity that I do with my family. It's the only thing that we do together on weekends that we can always count on. My mom believes in the Aboriginal traditions, but she also has the Christian faith. Christmas is also an important thing we do as a family. The whole family comes together at my grandma's house. I call her Koke'um—that's the Cree word for grandma. Christmas is really special, because my whole family's there. It's just good to see them, because they live all over the place.

The people who are most important in my life would probably be my mom, my best friend and my history teacher. My mom is important, because she's my mom. We're not getting along that good right now, but she matters to me a lot. She's mad at me, because I'm not doing that well in math. My best friend is always there to listen to me about my boyfriend or whatever. My history teacher and I are good friends. He's really understanding and fair. He's white, but he understands a lot about the treaties and Aboriginal culture. Right now, he's worried about me, because my marks are going down.

You'd think I'd have more time for school since there's not too many things to do here. But I like going to the ski hill, because we have fun there doing things like snowball fights and boarding. You can also learn new tricks from people. We go to the coffee shop or the restaurant. There's a place that just opened up and one of my friends works there. It's just a place to hang out and we

feel comfortable there. We sometimes go to the ice rink to watch hockey. I also belong to 4-H[21] and we do stuff like go to Fort San, make clothes, go to rodeos, snowboard or go to dances.

I go to powwows a lot. We've gone to a few powwows through school. We go to the Treaty Four Powwow,[22] if our teacher decides to take us.

In the summer, it's called "the powwow trail" and you just go to powwows all around the province, the country and even in the United States too. Our whole family goes.

Since my mom is part Cree and part Saulteaux, she taught me how to dance powwow. I'm a jingle dress dancer.[23] It comes from the Ojibway, and the Saulteaux are a branch of the Ojibway. My mom taught me how to do that when I was around three. I used to dance a lot, but now I feel kind of shy getting up there.

My *quin'eh* (godfather in Saulteaux) teaches us about the culture and why the powwows are important. He says it's the way we speak to each other, how we unite that makes the powwow important. Most of our family lives in the United States or across Canada, and we don't get to see each other much, so powwows give us a chance to get together. Sharing with the family is a really important part of our culture. We share things like food, because we have lots of potlucks. I learned how to make bannock at school. Bannock[24] is fried bread and I make that for the potlucks sometimes. When we get together, the older people share stories. Or if it's just kids hanging out, we share about the summer, boyfriends, things we've learned at school.

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[21] 4-H is a community-based organization dedicated to the growth and development of rural youth.

[22] Some early treaties signed between the Canadian government and First Nations in certain parts of Western Canada are referred to by numbers. Treaties are formal agreements between the Crown and Aboriginal people that set out promises, obligations and benefits for both parties. There are both historical treaties, defined as treaties made between 1701 and 1923 and modern treaties, which are designated as comprehensive land claim settlements. These modern treaties deal with areas where Aboriginal people's claims to Aboriginal rights have not been addressed by historical treaties or other legal arrangements. Under historical treaties, Aboriginal peoples ceded large tracts of land to the Crown in exchange for things, such as rights to hunt and fish, annuities, reserve lands, provision of agricultural equipment, teachers and educational assistance. Treaties provide a framework that helps define the relationship between First Nations and the government. Many treaties continue to be negotiated across the country.

The Treaty Four Powwow is part of a week-long annual celebration every year in Saskatchewan to recognize and discuss the establishment of Treaty Number 4 on September 15, 1874. Festivities include traditional stories, string games, tanning hides, smoking meats, performances and fashion shows showcasing the work of First Nations designers. Additionally, chiefs from all 13 original bands plus the 20 bands that have come under its jurisdiction since the original treaty attend the event to discuss issues surrounding the treaty, both past and present and put forward ideas to the public for discussion. Representatives from the British Crown and the RCMP attend the event to dispense the annual annuity payments, either in a local arena or in teepees set up on the treaty grounds. The powwow begins on the final weekend of the Treaty Four treaty days.

[23] The Jingle Dress Dance originated with the Ojibway in Minnesota and was gradually introduced throughout North America. The jingle dress is made from cloth and covered with small cone-shaped pieces of metal that were initially made from snuff lids. It takes 400 to 700 jingles to make one adult dress, the jingles are meant to be heard as the dancer moves. For more information, go to www.sicc.sk.ca/saskindian/a97jun29.htm.

[24] For instructions for making bannock, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/pdf/food.pdf.

I don't know how to speak the Cree language. It would make more sense for me to speak it if the people around me could speak it, but there aren't many people around me who do. There's no Aboriginal language instruction at our school. I would take it if they had it. There were classes for a little while when I was in elementary school, but it didn't work out too well. The teacher quit and it got all messed up. I can say some things in Saulteaux though. My mom talks to us in Saulteaux all the time. When I have kids, whenever they're with their *koke'um* (grandmother), she's going to talk Saulteaux to them so they know it. My mom thinks that's a good idea too. My *koke'um* went to residential school[25] and all her sisters (except for two of them) totally forgot how to speak Saulteaux. That's all they knew before they went to residential school. But my *koke'um* didn't forget. She was actually a Saulteaux teacher when she was younger. She told me that it's really important that we don't lose our language, because it's a part of who we are.

I don't know as much as I'd like to about my culture. I talk to some Elders like my *koke'um* (she's been going to some "sweats"[26] lately) and I learn things from my mom and my aunties. I have an Indian name which my *quin'eh* gave me. How it worked for me was my parents asked him to name me and he couldn't name me until he had a dream or a vision about what he should name me. My *quin'eh* had a dream that he gave me his name in Ojibway—Wauwaushkaesh—it means "little deer."

In my culture, what makes a good person is helping another person when they need help. You always have to respect your Elders too. Also, I don't really want to say it, but it's true: some people look at people, who have more money, as good—like if you live way over on the other side of town, the poor side, then you're not a good person. The people I look up to a lot are some of my teachers at school—like I said before. I also look up to my auntie, because she's fit, fun, stylish and has always been there for me. My auntie and me love to dance hip hop at home. We'll choreograph together for the hip hop classes that she teaches. I also have some older friends that I look up to. They're not afraid to say and do things. They can teach me things like carving and tricks at snowboarding, and they don't treat you like you're little.

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[25] Residential schools were initially established by the churches before Confederation and administered by the Government of Canada as early as 1874. The last federally run school closed in 1996. Residential schools were designed to provide education to Aboriginal peoples; however, it is now widely understood that this system weakened the identity of First Nations by separating them from their culture and families and preventing them from speaking their languages. The residential system had tragic effects on many Aboriginal children and their families. Today, many Aboriginal communities run their own schools and the number of First Nations elementary and secondary schools on reserves continues to grow. For more information, go to www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/ and www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca/english/history.html; see also Filmwest Associates, 1993. *Mission School Syndrome*. 58:50 min.

[26] Sometimes referred to as "sweats," the sweat lodge ceremony is a traditional ceremony for spiritual healing. The sweat lodge is built outdoors in a special place, constructed from wood, usually willow, and covered with blankets. There are specific ceremonial procedures for building and orienting the sweat lodge which vary from nation to nation. Rocks, which are granted special respect and referred to as grandfathers are heated in a fire outside the lodge and carried to a hole dug out at the center of the lodge once hot. Combined with water poured onto them, the rocks generate heat and steam for the ceremony while participants gather sitting in a circle surrounding the stones. It can become extremely hot inside, hence the name sweat ceremony. For more information, go to http //bearspiritvision.com/sweatlodge.htm.

The environment is important to me, because we need everything to survive—to keep going. That's another thing that I was taught. My *quin'eh* said that as Indians we have special ties to the land; we're connected to it. He was taught that each people were given a different sphere of the universe to look after and Aboriginal people were given the land. He also said that this is our land. We should take care of it and do our best not to ruin it more than it already has been.

There are two kinds of communities for Aboriginal people. One is their cultural community. You know how I said they're private about a lot of things? Well, their cultural community is like their family or their reserve and they keep this part of who they are to themselves. And then there's "the community" which is the surrounding area or the town. To me personally, community means home, because of friends and family. I also think that Aboriginal people are a lot more involved in their community than non-Aboriginals. For non-Aboriginal people, "community" is their town and that's it.

Non-Aboriginal people have a lot of perceptions about Aboriginal people and cultures, but I think that the average Canadian doesn't know a whole lot about us. The people around here might know more, because we intermix with them all the time. But for a long time, there have been a lot of people who just don't care to know; they don't seem to mind being ignorant. There's a kind of segregation here since the reserve is segregated from non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people could do a lot about it. I think a lot of times we're very private about a lot of things and maybe if we weren't so private then people would learn more.

The media have done a lot to distort ideas about Aboriginal people and their culture too. They show things that aren't true. I remember I was watching a cartoon and there was a bunch of Indians running around going "woo woo woo" and we don't do that. It made me laugh. Also they show a lot of Indian people to be all spiritual and mystical and you know, always talking about the Great Spirit and the land. Not everyone is like that. My dad, before he got married to my mom, he thought something totally different about Aboriginal people, because of what he was taught by his parents and even in school. Things like we were really not doing anything, living on the reserve, being lazy and being drunk. I think a lot of people think that Indians live in teepees, ride around on horses and hunt for every meal. A couple of years ago in California this girl asked me: "Do you live in a wigwam or a teepee or whatever you guys call it?" I was like: "No, I live in a house!"

There's not that much racism in the school where I go, but sometimes you can feel it from the students. For example, if the kids at school were asked about us, some of them might say something racist. Maybe they think this way, because they met one person who gave them a bad impression, so that's how they think about all of us. They might also get it from their parents. I take Aboriginal studies at school. There's only one girl in my class who takes it who's not Aboriginal. I don't know why more non-Aboriginal kids don't take it. There's a teacher at school who doesn't like me or my friends. I think he's sexist and racist, because the teacher won't say anything to the few white kids in my class if they're talking, but if my friends and I even whisper for a couple of seconds, he'll snap at us. It makes me mad, but he just brushes it off. It makes me feel bad when I see things like that. Overall though, I usually feel pretty comfortable in my school.

There are other places where there's more racism. My mom told me when she went to school, the white people and the Aboriginal people didn't talk at all, they just fought. It's not like that now. We talk with each other. Still, when you're walking down the street some old woman will just look at you. Or when you go into a store, the people will watch you and come up to the aisle you're in and try to pretend that they're not watching you. It either has to do with the fact that we're young or we're Aboriginal or both. It makes me mad! I just leave right away. It makes me feel uncomfortable to think that there are people who don't like me because I'm Aboriginal. I hang out with different groups, but one group of friends that I hang out with would fight other kids if they said anything racist to us. Most of my friends are Aboriginal. That's just how it happens.

The ideas that non-Aboriginal people have about us aren't accurate, because they don't know the real people. To help people understand us better, I would have someone come live with me for a little while. I'm quite normal and I think it helps if you know someone personally. I also think it would be good to have someone go around to schools and talk to kids about our culture—maybe an Elder. I think this would help change non-Aboriginal kids' ideas about Aboriginal people. One time wouldn't be enough though. We don't live in teepees, we're not drunks. We have jobs and we go to school.

If friends came to visit, I'd take them and introduce them to my other friends. We would go to the beaches and powwows like Treaty Four or Standing Buffalo. We have really big powwows here—they're fun. If they were into sports, I would also take them to open gym night at the school, or go snowboarding or skiing. I'd also maybe take them to Fort San. It's haunted! I stayed there this year on Halloween. There's a ghost there that looks like a maintenance guy that a lot of people have seen. One of my friends swears she heard his tools the night we stayed there!

My plan is to try to be a role model. I'm going to go to university and become a lawyer. That'd show people that not all Aboriginal people are living off of the government. In four years, I think I'll be at the University of Regina. I think some of my friends will be there too. One of my friends wants to be a photographer, and another one wants to have a basketball career. Anyway, school is important. You need education to go out and get a job, make money and survive. Also if you're educated I think you're less likely to be ignorant about other people, and their cultures and beliefs. I want my education and I don't mind going to school. Honestly though, I can see some of my friends still living in town in four years and doing things like working at A&W® and drinking all the time. They probably think they're not smart enough to go to university. I don't know if I'll stay here or not. It's so small here and there's not much to do. But I might consider living here, because if I become a lawyer, I want to help Aboriginal people with the justice system, and there's a lot of Aboriginal people around here.

In social studies, we're talking about human rights violations. My teacher talks about four methods of acculturation of peoples: annihilation, segregation, assimilation and accommodation. For example, annihilation was what the Nazis did to the Jews; we studied that for a whole month. We also learned about segregation like blacks in the American South. Assimilation happened to Aboriginal people when they went to residential schools, but we didn't learn about that at all. We

didn't even talk about it even though there's so many Aboriginal students at our school. People should know what went on in their own country.

Whether or not I consider myself to be a Canadian is a really complicated question. There's two arguments to this. Some Indians say that "we're the only ones that are 100 percent Canadian," but as an Aboriginal person, you really have to ask yourself whether you want to call yourself a Canadian or not. If you do, you have to remember that the Canadian government has done a lot to Aboriginal people that was meant to make us become like Europeans. For example, in residential schools, my *koke'um* told me you couldn't speak Saulteaux or you'd get beaten; you couldn't see your parents—things like that. We didn't have voting rights[27] for a long time. We also lost a lot of our culture. It's complicated. This country isn't based on Aboriginal people's beliefs. I don't really know if I'd call myself a Canadian. I don't know what else I'd call myself though; like if I go to Europe, what am I supposed to say?

One of the biggest challenges in our community is kids getting into trouble. I have a couple of friends who were charged for drugs and alcohol recently. There's a lot of drugs in town too. When a 15-year-old knows exactly where to go to get drugs, that's a problem. In the future, drug use could become really big among kids. They've known for a long time that alcohol is a big problem on the reserve. So many people have died in car accidents or at parties, because of violence.

If I were in charge, I would make a place for kids to hang out. If there were more things to do, then maybe teenagers wouldn't be getting into so much trouble. The community should find things for the kids to do in town, like a pool hall or an arcade. If I could design a place, it would have pool tables, arcade games, air hockey and a place to just sit and have coffee. I think there's going to be a skate park in a little while. I'm not that interested in it, but a lot of other kids will like it. If we had a good leader in our community, they would care about the youth. They would also have to have good communication skills and be able to understand the kids and what they're going through. They would know how to talk to everyone. Like most people I know, they might know how to talk to a certain group of people, but they don't know how to talk to others.

If I could send a message to non-Aboriginal people, it would be not to judge someone on how they look, because you don't know them until you talk to them. We're not really that different. We want a lot of the same things. We see the same things as important and we go through a lot of the same things. Just because our skin colour's different doesn't mean that we're different on the inside.

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[27] It wasn't until 1960 that the right to vote in federal elections was finally extended to First Nations in Canada. A large part of this advancement was due to pressure from Aboriginal veterans who pointed out the injustice of having fought for Canada in two world wars, yet being deprived of the right to vote.

5. FRANKLIN (FROM A NISGA'A COMMUNITY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA)

My name is Franklin, but everyone calls me Frankie. I'm 16. I'm not the only Franklin in my village; I'm not sure, but I think there are more than 10 of us named Franklin. I was named after my Uncle Franklin on my mother's side, who died just before I was born. The Uncle Franklin on my father's side is still alive.

We moved here about seven years ago from the village about 30 minutes down the road. I live in a house with my mother, my dad, my little sister, my little brother and my cousin George who comes from the same village where I was born, further north from here. George and I share a room, because there's not enough space for us to have separate rooms. He used to live in a group home here like other kids from his village, because there is no high school up there. He likes our house better, because the chores aren't as hard and the curfew isn't as strict as the group home. He goes back home during vacations, but now that a new road is being built between our villages he might be going back home on weekends too. That would be too bad because we do a lot of stuff together. George is in a grade behind me, he's only 15, but he's OK. I also have a brother and a sister who are older and don't live here.

Like a lot of the houses in our village our house is kind of crowded. But because my parents are pretty strict, we all get along. My dad is a research director with the Nisga'a Lisims Government.[28] He's smart and works hard, and he's a good guy. My mom is a teacher; she knows how to talk to people, especially kids. They both take good care of us. They know it's better to talk than to hit and that's good for me. We don't do a lot of things together as a family but we still cook together, watch TV, go to church, go on vacations and every week take a trip to town. They all care about me.

My life here isn't too exciting but I like it. Like all kids, I have to go to school. My weekday life goes pretty much like this: I wake up, shower, eat breakfast, walk to school, eat lunch, come home, watch some TV, do some homework, watch some more TV, eat dinner, meet my friends at the store or go to the gym and play some basketball, come home, watch some more TV, then sleep. That sums it up.

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[28] The Nisga'a are the Aboriginal people who live in the Nass River Valley of north-western British Columbia. The government represents about 6,000 people. Nisga'a government is democratic, representative and responsible to its citizens. It is composed of Nisga'a Lisims Government, which consists of executive and legislative branches, and a council of Elders and four village governments. Each Nisga'a village acts through its Nisga'a Village Government in exercising its rights, powers and privileges, and in carrying out its duties, functions and obligations. The Nisga'a Lisims Government is responsible for intergovernmental affairs.

The Nisga'a villages include Gingolx (Kincolith), Lakalzap (Greenville), Gitwinksihlkw (Canyon City) and Gitlakdamix (New Aiyansh). There are about 2,500 people living in these villages, and about 3,500 who live primarily in Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Terrace.

All members of the Nisga'a are organized into four clans: Gisk'ahaast (Killer Whale), Laxgibuu (Wolf), Ganada (Raven) and Laxsgiik (Eagle).

All of the kids in my family except my older brother and sister, go to the elementary and secondary school where my mom is a teacher. My older brother has finished school and works as a pilot for a company that flies cargo around northern British Columbia. My sister has a baby and lives in Vancouver. We miss her a lot and she misses us. I'm really proud of her, because she's gone back to school now. Our school is pretty big; there are a few hundred kids there and it has every grade and every subject. In my opinion, some subjects are cool and some subjects are boring, but mostly, I like lunch. That's when we can hang out with our friends and wander around the school until classes start again.

My weekends are better, because we can stay up later. On Friday nights all my friends and almost everyone else at school go to the Youth Drop-In at the community centre from 9 to 12 at night. Saturdays are spent sitting around, going fishing or going out in the bush and that's pretty cool. When Sunday rolls around my parents make me go to church in the morning, and then the rest of the day I spend watching TV, doing some homework, and watching more TV after that. I like to watch basketball and "The Simpsons." George doesn't like watching basketball, and I can't understand how someone can't like basketball, you know what I mean? So I tell him he's boring. Sometimes, we meet friends at the old water tower or hang out at somebody's house. Mainly, I like to relax.

I learn things at school, but my family and my Elders teach me a lot as well. My parents teach me right from wrong and my sister used to help me a lot when she lived with us. My Uncle Franklin (the one that's still alive) taught me a lot when I was growing up, like how to hunt, fish, make a fire and how to mow his lawn. We go fishing together a lot and my uncle knows where to go to get the best fish. Sometimes, we go to the bush to collect mushrooms. Usually, we just go for a couple of hours and in that time get lots of pine mushrooms. Personally, I don't like the taste of them, and in fact I don't know anyone who does, but I hear Japanese people love them. They pay good money for them anyway. Last fall we were getting $40 for every pound we collected. A guy I know paid off his car with the extra money he made from collecting mushrooms. He's really good at it though, because he really knows the forest. He could get almost 50 pounds of mushrooms in a day and that's a lot!

Ji ji Emma[29] is really important to me. She's my great aunt. She speaks Nisga'a fluently. I learn the language at school, in Nisga'a class and it's pretty cool to have a conversation with her in our Aboriginal language. I'm not fluent, but I'm learning. Some of my friends can speak it fluently though. Ji ji Emma told me about years ago in the residential schools where the kids weren't allowed to speak their language and they would get a ruler across the hand if they spoke Aboriginal words. Whenever they talked in their Aboriginal language, they got into a lot of trouble.

[29] Ji ji Emma is the name Franklin uses for his great aunt. *Ji ji* literally translates to granny and *jits* would be grandmother. In Nisga'a culture all of your mother's sisters are your mothers as well. All of your granny's sisters are considered your grandmothers. In the extended family, everyone takes care of each other, aunts are just as responsible for raising and disciplining the children as mothers are. In the same way, all of your cousins are also your brothers and sisters.

My grandmother told me about it too. Nowadays, a lot of people don't speak it, which is too bad, because it's pretty much the basis of our culture. There's other stuff, though, like drawing, dancing, painting, carving, hunting and fishing that are also part of Nisga'a culture[30]. I'd say one of the problems we need to fix in our community is the loss of our culture. We're not really getting it back. We're trying to, gradually, but the Elders worry that not enough of the new ones speak Nisga'a. I guess by learning and speaking Nisga'a I'm helping to maintain our traditional language and culture.

I also have an Aboriginal name, which means bear jumps back. I don't really know why I'm called that. Ji ji Emma could explain that better than me. There was a ceremony for me when I received the name, and I had to make a speech at a big feast, which was scary, but fun at the same time. We have lots of feasts. It seems we have a feast almost every second weekend. The biggest one was when our people signed the land treaty[31] with the provincial and federal governments. It took us a long time to get a treaty, but it was pretty exciting when it finally happened. My dad helped with that.

The treaty was signed in our community and we had people from all over staying in our village. The gym was packed with dancers. It was really interesting to see so many people that I didn't know in our gym. I danced a little too, but not like the visitors. I felt a little silly wearing the costume that looks like a skirt.

We have feasts[32] for most special occasions. I guess you're getting the impression that we eat a lot. But the feasts aren't just about dinner; they are also a time when everybody gets together.

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[30] See www.civilization.ca/aborig/storytel/nisg1eng.html for information on Nisga'a stories and carvings.

For more information about Nisga'a culture contact:
Nisga'a Lisims Government
Box 231, New Aiyansh, BC, V0J 1A0, Toll free: 1-866-633-0888, Fax: (250) 633-2367, www.nisgaalisims.ca/

[31] In the words of Joseph Gosnell, Sr., President of the Nisga'a Tribal Council, September, 1998:

To the Nisga'a people, a treaty is a sacred instrument, the legal framework for a new society based on self-reliance and self-actualization. Fairly and honourably negotiated, the treaty represents a major breakthrough for aboriginal self-determination—one of the most pressing issues in contemporary Canada and around the world.

The Nisga'a Treaty was the first modern-day land claims agreement. On May 11, 2000 the treaty came into effect, transferring nearly 2,000 square kilometres of Crown land to the Nisga'a Nation and creating Bear Glacier Provincial Park and a 300,000 cubic decametre water reservation. With the treaty, the Nisga'a Nation also won the means to make its own laws in a number of important areas that affect their lives. For example, among other areas, they may make laws to regulate and administer their lands, and to protect, expand and endorse Nisga'a language and culture. This includes laws that permit the reproduction and use of cultural practices and symbols, as well as Nisga'a language teaching. For more information about the treaty, go to www.nisgaalisims.ca/.

[32] One very important feast to the Nisga'a is the settlement feast, also known as a potlatch. It is considered an institution and serves many functions, the most important of which is to continue Nisga'a title to the land from generation to generation. The ownership of land is exercised collectively by the Nisga'a Nation, rather than by individuals. The chief of each tribe is vested with this ownership, although all members of the tribe share the right to resources of the land. When a chief of a tribe dies, his title is passed on to the most deserving member of the tribe. The settlement feast is held for a tribe to pass on title to the land the chief owned to the next chief. Other ranking tribal chiefs have to be present as witnesses to participate and approve. The new chief and his tribe also provide gifts to those invited. The settlement feast provides oral proof to the Nation of land title, in a similar way to the written proof of title that the federal government's land titles office provides. For more information, go to www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/nisga1/cult-e.html.

like a party but for everybody in the village. Feasts require lots of preparation. The people who host the feast have to feed up to 200 people, sometimes more. We have feasts for weddings, for newcomers to our village, for Thanksgiving, naming feasts, cleansing feasts, holidays, and they can last as long as eight, maybe nine hours. There are gifts, speeches, stories, awards, more food, and more speeches. The food we eat at the feast is really good and filling; it's usually something like moose stew with carrots and potatoes.

We would have a feast for raising a totem pole, too. The most amazing thing to see in our village is a totem pole carving.[33] It's mind-blowing to watch how they can take a plain piece of wood and create something out of it with their own hands. I remember them raising a totem pole to honour the death of one of the chiefs. It was put up near the water, along the same place where the people used to hang animal skulls to make us seem vicious, to scare away intruders.

One of the biggest feasts of all is the stone moving feast. When people die, they get a headstone, which stays at the deceased's house after the funeral. Usually, about a year or more after the death, the stone is moved to where the body is buried. This marks an end to the formal grieving period of family and friends. There is a big and pretty complicated ceremony and community feast that happens at that time. During the ceremony, a bowl is passed around for people to put money in, then the money is given back to the community for special things. People are supposed to be generous. Sometimes over $30,000 is raised by the collection. It's a big deal for chiefs and people who had a good year to make big contributions to the collection.[34]

Eating moose or beef is usually for special occasions like at the feasts. Mainly, we catch fish. Salmon and oolichan[35] are pretty popular. Oolichan grease is good on toast. There are lots of ways to make the food last longer, like preserving it in a smokehouse. It's probably because we go hunting and fishing for food sometimes, that the land, the rivers and lakes are very important to us; seeing a bunch of garbage in the ditch makes me sick. We really need to clean it up. That's why when I see kids littering, I call them on it, I tell them to pick it up. Sometimes, people take too much from the land. For example, there are hunters who take more than they need. It's our land. We have to respect it and help save it.

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[33] Totem poles are created by north-western coast First Nations. They are made up of symbols that have meaning to the carver or to the person sponsoring the pole. Totem poles are like emblems or crests that depict animals and supernatural beings adopted as important symbols for a clan, family or individual. They can also depict stories and, sometimes, a carver will even carve a joke into the totem without informing the sponsor by, for example, positioning an animal upside down. For more information go to the Kid's Stop/Information Sheets www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/ or http://collections.ic.gc.ca/.

[34] For more information, go to www.geocities.com/aryanshholytrinity/pictures.html

[35] A finger-sized fish that is part of the smelt family. Oolichan is the mainstay of Nisga'a culture and, historically, a staple of Nisga'a trade. Oolichan is also known as candlefish, because when they are dried, they maintain enough oil to burn like a candle. To see photos, go to www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/nisga2/activit-e.html

Like I said, I learn a lot from my family, throughout my whole life, I've learned stuff from my Elders and my parents. Some of my siblings taught me things I didn't know before, but out of everyone in my family, it's been mostly my grandparents that have been my greatest teachers. When it comes to what I learn at school though, I think that if I want to continue my education after I graduate from high school, I'm going to have to move south. Everybody needs an education. Some of my cousins and my brother are all back in school after dropping out because they want better jobs. Yah, in a few years I'll probably be in college down south. I'd like to play basketball in college and maybe study to be a teacher. Maybe I'll find a job in the city, but I'll probably come back to my village and work for the community or village government. I'm not so sure what my friends will do. They'll probably go away to school and come home again when they're done. Lots of people go away then come back. My cousin George wants to go into the military, but after, he'll probably come back too. Here, everybody knows each other but in the city you don't know anybody. There are new faces everywhere and you never know what they are like. The village is predictable, and you feel pretty safe here. It's comfortable. I know everybody, it just feels right and it's quiet and peaceful.

One thing that's very important in our community is respect. And we're closer because of it. The media gives the impression that non-Aboriginal people aren't very close with their families and neighbours, because they're in a big city with too many people around, so they just keep to themselves. In our village, it's really not like that. Everybody pretty much knows everybody else. That's why it's pretty important to be yourself in a place like this. If you act like something you are not, people are going to find out pretty quick and it's hard to respect that. For me, it's home. Everybody knows me, and I've been helped out by a lot of people, like my family and friends. Even George sometimes gives me good advice. He's always around to help me out with something and he helps out Ji ji Emma, too. I think people in the village are closer to each other than in the big city. Here, it's important to be a hard worker, to help other people, and not to talk about anyone behind their back. It's important to help Elders whenever stuff comes up and treat everyone with respect. Like I said earlier, it's pretty difficult to get away with acting like anything you're not; you can't be stuck up.

I'd say everything seems to be going pretty good for all of us, especially since the treaty. But there are still problems we have to fix, like the loss of our culture that I mentioned before. Also, finding money to do the stuff we want to do isn't always easy, like raising money for the basketball team. My parents are in the Lion's Club and it does a lot of things to help the kids in our community, which is good. But, there aren't a lot of jobs in our village so quite a few people live on social assistance, while some others make big bucks quick, quit their job, and then spend it all. Some people don't know how to invest their money I guess. These are some of the problems. If it was up to me to decide what to do for our community, I'd like to pave the roads. Everything is gravel around here and it gets pretty dirty in the spring. I wouldn't mind being able to drive my four-wheeler a little faster. I'd also build a nicer house for the Elders too. It's hard for them to get around sometimes, and they need a nice place to live.

The biggest problem though, in my opinion is drugs. We need to take out all the drugs wrecking our community, because they're a real problem. Young kids just starting high school get into a lot of alcohol and marijuana. Sure it's fun for people sometimes, but its ruining the community. It's kind of sad that so many teenagers are into it; it's like they're replacing everything good with drugs or alcohol. They're drinking away all their problems. But, having said that, I also have to say don't believe everything you hear about us. There are people who drink and have problems, but not everybody. There are good things going on here too.

I would show visitors lots of good stuff. There are always sports in the gym. I go there almost every night. I would take them fishing, or we could go up to the lookout. The view is amazing from there; you can see the entire village and all around. It's nice up there. People should come visit.

When it comes to being part of Canada, I think Canada is a pretty cool country. Education is one of the good things about living in Canada. The government helps us with some things, like education, but we also have and need self-government.[36] That's what the treaty is for. The treaty is part of being Canadian, sort of. Before the Europeans came, we already had our own self-government, we didn't have a name for it or anything, but there was an understanding and people weren't above other people. That's just how it was. Now that we have our treaty, I think things are better for our community. Now we know how to get what we need, and we can make decisions for ourselves. The treaty gives us the respect we feel we deserve.

The treaty, getting our own self-government, also made people outside our community know about us. When the provincial government held a referendum to try and stop the treaty, people learned a lot about us, because we were in the news. Before that and in general, I don't think people from the city or people who live outside our valley really paid much attention to us. I'm not saying they should, it's just that we aren't really a part of their lives and they aren't a part of ours. The treaty changed that a bit though; getting our own self-government made people know about us. Before, people knew that we were brown, and we cooked good fish. It would be nice if they knew more because they wouldn't think less of us. It doesn't matter too much, though, I guess we get ideas about non-Aboriginal people from the media just like they get ideas about us.

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[36] Self-government refers to government that is designed, established and implemented by Aboriginal peoples. According to Aboriginal peoples, they have always been self-governing, and many want to formalize their own traditional clan or tribal forms of government where they feel these forms have been disturbed by the First Nation government structures of the *Indian Act*. Other Aboriginal peoples wish to keep the band in council framework of the *Indian Act*, and desire greater jurisdiction for it.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

In this section, you will find suggested activities you can select from after reading the narratives. The activities are based on the narratives and on additional sources, which will have to be researched to complete the given tasks. Additionally, extensions can be done either as an alternative activity or as an additional way of gaining knowledge and expressing newly gained understanding. The activities have been structured around generalized curriculum skill sets.

ACTIVITY 1 – CREATING UNDERSTANDING

OBJECTIVE:

Create a collage, montage or three-dimensional piece to explore and describe what you have learned about the life of a First Nation or Inuk youth. (Inuk is the singular form of Inuit.)

TOPIC:

The topic will be the life of an Aboriginal youth, as seen through the narratives.

MATERIALS:

Use materials you feel are most relevant and telling: photographs, illustrations, textiles or objects. Materials selection is up to you, but, they must be from at least two different sources (i.e., from a magazine, a newspaper, objects from nature, the Internet).

GETTING STARTED:

- Begin by using a graphic organizer/mind map to organize your ideas about the lives of the Aboriginal youth in the narratives. (A sunburst organizer is effective; the main subject is put in a circle in the middle, and ideas about the topic are placed at the end of lines around it.)
- You may want to organize your ideas around the following areas: values, relationship to the land/the environment, challenges facing Aboriginal youth in Canada, current issues and historical biases that affect Aboriginal youth, and similarities and differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth in Canada.
- Once you have written down your ideas, elaborate your graphic depiction with notes on how to represent them with images and symbols.

NEXT STEPS: PRODUCTION

- The next step is to produce your depiction. Choose the visual genre (e.g., montage, collage, mobile, etc.) you are going to use. Find the images from magazines, newspapers and other sources, or other types of materials, and design your visual project in a manner that you think depicts, through images and symbols, the life of an Aboriginal youth.
- Hand in both the initial graphic organizer you used to organize and record your ideas, and your final production.

DISCUSSION: GROUP SHARE

When everyone has finished their piece, take some time to examine the projects of your classmates. After surveying some of the other projects, form a group of four, and one at a time explain your project to the other group members. Discuss your project in terms of:

- the main themes of your production/what you meant to express through your images/objects/symbols; and
- why you chose your materials.

Discuss the similarities and differences among group members' works and any questions you still have.

SUMMARY

Take five minutes following your group's discussion to record, independently, at least three reflections on how your ideas have or have not changed with regard to the lives of Aboriginal youth in Canada, or on how your life is different or similar from that of the youth in the narratives. Finish your reflection with at least one question or issue surrounding Aboriginal youth that you would like to know more about.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

- After mapping your own ideas on paper as in the above activity, form a group of four or five and together discuss similarities and differences in your perceptions and ideas. Create a series of three or four tableaux that depict your collective ideas about the lives of Aboriginal youth based on the narratives. Briefly discuss your ideas with the rest of the class after you have presented your tableaux.
- Design a computer slide presentation montage that depicts the life of an Aboriginal youth in the same way as described in the main activity.
- In both of these alternative activities, as a summary, reflect on what you learned and what you would still like to know in the same way as described in the main activity.

ACTIVITY 2– MEDIA COMPARISONS

OBJECTIVE:

Choose a topic and compare at least two sources on the same topic, one from Aboriginal media and one from mainstream media (broadcast and/or print).

TOPIC:

Choose a topic from the narratives that affects the lives of Aboriginal youth.

MATERIALS:

- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media sources
- Internet if possible

GETTING STARTED:

- Determine your topic. You can get some ideas from the list below, and find at least two different sources: one from the Aboriginal media and one from mainstream media that relate to it.

NEXT STEPS: RESEARCH AND COMPARISON

- Collect clippings, audio files, video files if possible.
- As you read from your different sources, take notes on the main points the articles make about the topic.
- After reading/listening/viewing all of your sources, make a diagram to compare how the statements in the sources are similar and different from one another with regards to your chosen topic. A Venn diagram or a T-chart would be useful. Include what points may be missing from one source, but are included in the other. Also, compare editorializing and factual content from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media.
- Brainstorm a list of possible reasons for any differences or similarities between the sources.
- In paragraph form, explain your comparison and any reasons you think might cause the similarities and differences.

VARIATIONS ON THE ACTIVITY: PAIR AND SHARE

Work in pairs and choose a topic together. Each partner can read one of the sources, and take notes individually. Get together with your partner to discuss the main points in each article. Together, make a diagram to explain the similarities and differences between the sources.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Write a brief letter (one to three paragraphs) to one of the media sources outlining whether or not you agree with them and why.

SOME POSSIBLE TOPICS:

- Income tax/GST exemptions
- Resource extraction
- Residential schools
- The Nisga'a Treaty
- Self-government
- The Oka Crisis
- Policing in Aboriginal communities
- Contaminated land sites in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories
- Hunting and fishing rights

POSSIBLE SOURCES: ABORIGINAL MEDIA

Aboriginal Multi-Media Society www.ammsa.com/

Alberta Sweetgrass www.ammsa.com/sweetgrass/

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network www.aptn.ca/

Chiefs of Ontario Magazine www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/magazine/index.html

First Nations Periodical Index www.lights.com/sifc/

Native Web www.nativeweb.org/resources/

Recherches amerindiennes au Québéc www.recherches-amerindiennes.qc.ca/ (French only)

Saskatchewan Indian – A Collection of Selected Full Text Articles, 1970-2003 www.sicc.sk.ca/saskindian/index.htm

SAY magazine www.saymag.com/

First Perspective www.firstperspective.ca/

Nunatsiaq News www.nunatsiaq.com/

Ontario Birchbark www.ammsa.com/birchbark/index.htm

Raven's Eye www.ammsa.com/raven/

Saskatchewan Sage www.ammsa.com/sage/

Windspeaker www.ammsa.com/windspeaker/

POSSIBLE SOURCES: MAINSTREAM PRINT MEDIA

Canada.com www.canada.com/index.html

Canadian Newspapers www.broadcast-live.com/newspapers/canadian.html

CBC Archives http://archives.cbc.ca/index.asp?IDLan=1

CBC North http://cbc.ca/north/

GlobeandMail.com www.theglobeandmail.com/

Macleans.ca www.macleans.ca/

Print Media Online www.synapse.net/radio/print.htm#can-mags

National Post www.canada.com/nationalpost/index.html

ACTIVITY 3 – ABORIGINAL ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

OBJECTIVE:

This activity will have you explore artistic expression in Aboriginal culture by conducting research on First Nation or Inuit art and artists.

TOPIC:

Identify characteristics of First Nations or Inuit art forms and explain how they represent that culture. Remember that each First Nation has its own culture reflected in its own art forms.

MATERIALS:

- List of Canadian First Nations or Inuit artists
- Internet access
- Selection of works from Aboriginal artists

GETTING STARTED:

Choose an Aboriginal artist. You may use the lists below for possible suggestions, or do your own research to find an Aboriginal artist whose work you would like to explore. Find at least one piece of work by this artist and take time to listen to it/look at it/read it.

NEXT STEPS: RESEARCH

Research their body of work to answer at least three of the following questions.

- What is the artist's cultural background. What region is the artist originally from?
- How does the artist further the interests of First Nation or Inuit peoples?
- What does the artist tell you about Aboriginal identity?
- What does the artist tell you about her/his culture?
- What does the artist tell you about the history of Aboriginal people?
- What does the artist tell you about challenges facing Aboriginal people?
- Is the artist breaking down stereotypes and biases about Aboriginal people? If so, how?
- What other contributions are made by the work of this artist?

Write a brief reflection: Do you like the work of this artist? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION: JIGSAW SHARE

Form a group of three with your classmates, making sure that each group member has researched a separate artist using different media if possible (i.e., music, painting, dance, etc.). Briefly take turns explaining an interesting aspect of your research to other group members (5 minutes).

EXTENSIONS:

- Develop a thesis about the artist's contributions based on one or more of these questions and write a short essay (one to two pages) outlining your arguments.
- Design a publicity brochure/website to promote the work of your chosen artist, incorporating all your research.

A SELECTION OF CANADIAN ABORIGINAL ARTISTS

Musicians

Angava www.angava.com/

Breach of Trust www.sicc.sk.ca/saskindian/a03win06.htm

Lucie Idlout www.lucieidlout.com/

Robbie Robertson www.naaf.ca/html/r_robertson_e.html

Sandy Scofield www.sandyscofield.com/

Susan Aglukark www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

War Party www.warparty.ca/

Actors

Chief Dan George www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Gary Farmer www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Graham Greene www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Tina Keeper www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Visual Artists

Daphne Odjig, painter www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Bill Reid, sculptor www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Kiawak Ashoona, carver www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Ohito Ashoona, sculptor www.naaf.ca/html/o_ashoona_e.html

Susan Point, Coast Salish artist www.susanpoint.com/

Writers

Basil Johnston, author and storyteller www.ainc-inac.ca/ks/

Drew Hayden Taylor www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Jeanette Armstrong www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Lee Maracle www.hanksville.org/storytellers/maracle/

Pauline Johnson www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ks/

Thomas King www.ipl.org/div/natam/bin/browse.pl/A44/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Great North Productions. *Dreamspeakers, From Spirit to Spirit Series.* Filmwest Associates, 1993. 24 min. This film documents Aboriginal actors, playwrights, directors and film producers from various countries collaborating on a production. It explores the creative process and emphasizes Aboriginal viewpoints.

Filmwest Associates. *Spirit of the Arctic.* 1995. 26 min. This film delves into the artistic and technical processes of the unique style of art produced by Inuit people from the Arctic.

Filmwest Associates. *My Partners, My People Series – Tantoo Cardinal.* 1991. 26 min. A filmed biography of Tantoo Cardinal, a First Nations actor from Canada.

ACTIVITY 4 – SURVEYING THE EXPERTS

OBJECTIVE:

This activity will have you gather information about specific topics of interest on the culture of one of the youth narratives (e.g., Inuit, Cree) by contacting relevant organizations or individuals who represent the cultural or political interests of that group.

MATERIALS:

- List of Aboriginal organizations
- Internet and e-mail access if possible

GETTING STARTED:

- On your own or with a partner, make a list of topics or issues from one of the narratives you would like to learn more about (e.g., policies on Aboriginal self-government, cultural practices).
- Draft a questionnaire of at least five questions that covers your list.

NEXT STEPS:

- Choose an Aboriginal organization you think would best be able to answer your questions.
- Either send them your questions by e-mail or contact them by phone. If contacting them by e-mail, plan for at least a week to receive your response. Follow up with a phone call if you have not gotten a response after seven days.

REFLECTION:

After receiving answers to your questionnaire, compose a brief reflection, writing at least four things you learned from the process of both formulating your questions and contacting the organization individual. Also write down at least one thing you would do differently, if you did this project again.

SUMMARY:

When everyone in your class has collected their responses, place the questions and responses into a booklet and keep it as a reference material for future classes.

OR

Create a class bulletin board that showcases everyone's questions and answers along with their reflections.

EXTENSIONS/ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES:

- Write a letter to an Aboriginal political organization asking for clarification on an issue you read about in the narratives (e.g., Aboriginal self-government or land claims agreements).
- Write an article in your school newspaper using the answers from your questionnaire.

NOTE: It is very important that your article and answers are recorded accurately and that quotation marks are used for direct quotes.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: Review procedures for writing accurately. It is OK for students to request to tape interviews.

ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Assembly of First Nations
Trebla Building
473 Albert Street, Suite 810
Ottawa, ON
K1R 5B4
Tel: (613) 241-6789 or 1-866-869-6789
www.afn.ca/

Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada
56 Sparks Street, Suite 502
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5A9
Tel: (613) 724-4677 or 1-866-724-3049
www.anac.on.ca/

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa, ON
K1K 3B1
Tel: (613) 747-6022
www.abo-peoples.org/

First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres
666 Kirkwood Avenue, Unit 302
Ottawa, ON
K1Z 5X9
Tel: (819) 728-5999
www.fnccec.com/index2.html

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
170 Laurier Ave. W., Suite 510
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5V5
Tel: (613) 238-8181
www.itk.ca/

Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association
56 Sparks Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5A9
Tel: (613) 238-3977 or 1-800-667-0749
www.pauktuutit.ca/

Métis National Council
350 Sparks Street, Suite 201
Ottawa, ON
K1R 7S8
Tel: (613) 232-3216 or 1-800-928-6330
www.metisnation.ca/

Métis National Youth Advisory Council
350 Sparks Street, Suite 201
Ottawa, ON
K1R 7S8
Tel: (613) 232-3216 or 1-800-928-6330
www.metisyouth.com/

National Association of Friendship Centres
275 Maclaren Street
Ottawa, ON
K2P 0L9
Tel: (613) 563-4844
www.nafc-aboriginal.com/

Native Women's Association of Canada
1292 Wellington Street West
Ottawa, ON
Tel: (613) 722-3033
K1Y 3A9
www.nwac-hq.org/

RESOURCES

This section provides a list of resources that may be used in conjunction with the narratives and activities provided in this document. While these titles provide a variety of authors and topics, this is not an exhaustive list; there are many other books, videos and websites not represented here.

BOOKS

Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto.* Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Alvord, Lori, M.D. and Elizabeth C. Van Pelt. *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear.* Toronto: Bantam Books, 1999.

Angus, Murray. *Les derniers seront les premiers: politiques visant les Autochtones en periode de restrictions budgetaires.* Montréal: Les Éditions Écosociété, 1993.

Armstrong, Jeannette. *Slash.* Pentiction: Theytus Books, Ltd, 1990.

Armstrong, Jeannette, *Enwhisteetkwa: Walk in Water.* Pentiction: Okanagan Tribal Council, 1982.

Armstrong, Jeannette. *Whispering in Shadows.* Pentiction: Theytus Books, Ltd., 2000.

Armstrong, L.O. Hiawatha, *The Mohawk: The Lake Champlain Tercentenary Pageant, 1909.* Kahnawake: Kanienkehada Raotitiohkwa Press, 1981.

Barreiro, Jose (ed). *Indian Roots of American Democracy.* Ithaca: AKWE:KON Press, 1992.

Baxendale, Michael and Craig Maclaine. *This Land Is Our Land: The Mohawk Revolt at Oka.* Montréal: Optimum Publishing Int'l Inc., 1990.

Brant, Beth. *I'll Sing 'Til the Day I Die.* Toronto: McGilligan Books, 1995.

Brass, Eleanor, *I Walk in Two Worlds.* Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1987. www.fitzhenry.ca/.

Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West.* Toronto: Bantam Books, 1990.

Burger, Julian. *The Gaia Atlas of First Peoples: A Future for the Indigenous World.* Toronto: Anchor Books, 1990.

Byrne, Nympha and Camille Fouillard (eds). *It's Like the Legend: Innu Women's Voices.* Charlottetown: gynergy books, 2000.

Canada, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. *Through Mala's Eyes – Life in an Inuit Community.* Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2003.

Carter, Sarah. *Lost Harvests, Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy.* Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.

Cross, Ronald and Hélène Sévigny. *Lasagna, the Man Behind the Mask.* Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1994.

Culhane, Dara. *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology, Law and First Nations.* Burnaby: Talonbooks, 1998.

Dion, J.F. *My Tribe the Crees.* Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1993.

Dressel, Holly. *Good News for a Change: Hope for a Troubled Planet.* Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co., 2002.

Erdrich, Louise. *The Beet Queen.* New York: Harper and Collins, 1987.

Erdrich, Louise. *The Birchbark House.* New York: Hyperion, 1999.

Faith, Karlene. *Unruly Women: The Politics of Confinement and Resistance.* Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1993.

Freeman, Minnie Aodla. *Ma vie chez les Qallunaat.* LaSalle: Éditions Hurtubise HMH Ltee., 1990.

Gabriel-Doxtater, B.K. and A.K. Van den Hende. *At the Wood's Edge: An Anthology of the History of the People of Kanehsatà:ke.* Kanehsatà:ke Education Centre, Quebec, 1995.

Gillmor, Don and Pierre Turgeon. *Canada: A People's History,* Volume 1. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2000.

Glenbow Museum. Nitsitapiisinni: *The Story of the Blackfoot People. The Blackfoot Gallery Committee, Firefly Books.* Calgary: Glenbow Alberta Institute, 2002. www.glenbow.org/. Nd.

Haig-Brown, Celia. *Resistance and Renewal, Surviving the Indian Residential School.* Vancouver: Tillacum Library, Arsenal Pulp Press Ltd., 1993.

Hamilton, A.C. and C.M. Sinclair. *Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, Volume 2: The Death of Helen Betty Osborne; Volume 3: The Death of John Joseph Harper.* Province of Manitoba, 1999.

Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen.* Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1998.

Hunter, Robert and Robert Calihoo. *Occupied Canada: A Young White Man Discovers His Unsuspected Past.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991.

Long, J. Anthony and Menno Boldt (eds). *Governments in Conflict? Provinces and Indian Nations in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Maracle, Lee . *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel.* Toronto: Women's Press, 1990.

Maracle, Lee. *Sojourners and Sundogs: First Nations Fiction.* Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1999.

King, Thomas. *Green Grass, Running Water.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

Maki, Joel T. (ed). *Steal My Rage: New Native Voices.* Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995.

Matthiessen, Peter. *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse.* New York: Viking, 1991.

Miller, J.R. (ed). *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Molloy, Tom. *The World Is Our Witness.* Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 2000.

Monture-Angus, Patricia. *Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks.* Halifax: Fernwood, 1995.

Morin, Paul and James Whetung. *The Vision Seeker.* Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 1996.

Mosionier, Beatrice Culleton. *In Search of April Raintree: Critical Edition.* Ed. Cheryl Suzack. Winnipeg: Portage and Main, 1999.

Muckle, Bob, *The First Nations of British Columbia.* Vancouver: Raincoast Book Distribution, 1998.

Petrone, Penny (ed). *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Pindera, Loreen and Geoffrey York. *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka.* Toronto: Little, Brown and Co. Canada Ltd., 1991.

Richardson, Boyce. *Strangers Devour the Land.* Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1991.

Roche, Judith and Meg McHutchison (eds). *First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim.* Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998.

Scofield, Gregory. *Native Canadiana: Songs from the Urban Rez.* Vancouver: Polestar, 1996.

Singer, Beverly. *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens, Native American Film and Video.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Spittal, W.G. (ed). *Iroquois Women, an Anthology.* Ohsweken: Iroquois Publishing and Craft Supplies, 1996.

Stonechild, Blair and Bill Waiser. *Loyal till Death—Indians and the North West Rebellion.* Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1997.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock.* Toronto: Fifth House, 1990.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *"Girl Who Loved Her Horses: A One-Act Play for Young Audiences."* The Drama Review. 41 (3) (1997): 153-81.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Funny, You Don't Look Like One: Observations of a Blue-Eyed Ojibway.* Penticton, B.C. : Theytus Books, 1998.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth.* Burnaby, BC: Talonbooks, 1998.

Taylor, Drew Hayden. *AlterNatives.* Burnaby, BC: Talonbooks, 2000.

Tribal Chiefs Institute/Indian and Northern Affairs. *In Their Footsteps: Contributions of First Nations People in Alberta.* Edmonton: Duval Publishing, 2001. www.duvalhouse.com/.

Wachowich, Nancy. *Saqiyuq: Stories From the Lives of Three Inuit Women.* Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.

Wadden, Marie. Nitassinan: *The Innu Struggle to Reclaim Their Homeland.* Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001.

Warry, Wayne. *Unfinished Dreams: Community Healing and the Reality of Aboriginal Self-Government.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Warwaruk, L. *Sundog Highway: Writing from Saskatchewan.* Regina: Coteau Books/Thunder Creek Publishing Cooperative, 2000. www.coteaubooks.com/.

Wright, Ronald. *Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes.* Toronto: Viking, 1991.

York, Geoffrey. *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada.* London: Vintage, 1990.

ANTHOLOGIES

Allen, Paula Gunn (ed). *Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women.* New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1990.

Brant, Beth (ed). *A Gathering of Spirit: A Collection of North American Indian Women.* Third Edition. Toronto: Women's Press, 1988.

Fife, Connie (ed). *The Colour of Resistance: A Contemporary Collection of Writing by Aboriginal Women.* Toronto: Sister Vision, 1993.

Grant, Agnes (ed). *Our Bit of Truth: An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature.* Winnipeg: Pemmican, 1990.

Green, Rayna (ed). *That's What She Said: Contemporary Poetry and Fiction by Native American Women.* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984.

Hodgson, Heather (ed). *Seventh Generation: Contemporary Native Writing.* Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books, 1989.

Jaine, Linda and Drew Taylor. *Voices: Being Native in Canada.* Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Extension Division, 1992.

King, Thomas (ed). *All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Fiction.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Moses, Daniel David and Terry Goldie (eds). *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English.* Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992

Perreault, Jeanne, and Sylvia Vance, eds. *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada, an Anthology.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993.

For other text resources, search the website of the Department of Education and Youth for the Manitoba provincial government www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/iru/publications/aboriginal/ae-index.html.

VIDEOS

Adams, Robert. *Urban Elder.* National Film Board of Canada, 1997. 27 min.

Brody, Hugh. *The Washing of Tears.* Nootka Sound and Picture Co., 1994. 55 min.

Cardinal, Gil and Wil Campbell. *The Spirit Within.* National Film Board of Canada, 1990. 51 min.

Face to Face Media and the NFB Canada. *First Nations: The Circle Unbroken Series.* Volumes 1-4, package of 13, 20 min. programs. 1993.

Filmwest Associates. Tantoo. *My Partners, My People Series.* 26 min. 1991. www.filmwest.com/.

Filmwest Associates. *Mother Tongue. My Partners, My People Series.* 26 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1991.

Filmwest Associates. George Littlechild. *My Partners, My People Series.* 24 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1991.

Filmwest Associates. *Native Justice. My Parters, My People Series.* 26 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1991.

Filmwest Associates. *Douglas Cardinal. My Partners, My People Series.* 23:44 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1991.

Filmwest Associates. *Mission School Syndrome.* 58:50 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1993.

Filmwest Associates. *Counter Currents: The Fight for Fish on the Fraser River.* 45 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1993.

Filmwest Associates. *Inherit the Earth: A First Nations Success Story.* 26 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1995.

Filmwest Associates. *The North American Indigenous Games.* 52 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1995.

Filmwest Associates. *Spirit of the Arctic.* 26 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1995.

Filmwest Associates. *The Potlatch.* 28 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1999.

Great North Productions Inc. *Dreamspeakers – From Spirit to Spirit Series.* 24 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1993.

Gryphon Productions Ltd. *First Nations Portraits.* 28 min. West Vancouver, 1994.

Kunuk, Zacharias. *Atanarjuat.* 2 hrs, 41 min. National Film Board of Canada, 2001. www.atanarjuat.com/.

Lynx Images Releasing. *First Nations – Native Stereotyping.* 30 min. Toronto, 1994.

Midwicki, Marvin, Les Holdway and Christopher Wilson. *Wandering Spirit Survival School.* 27 min. National Film Board of Canada, 1978.

Mongrel Media. Box *of Treasures.* 35 min. 1983.

National Film Board. *Kanehsatake Package: My Name is Kahentiiosta,* 29 min., *Kanehsatake,* 29 min. National Film Board of Canada, 1993. www.nfb.ca/.

National Film Board. *Silent Tears.* 27:50 min. The National Film Board of Canada, 1998. Includes a graphic depiction of surgery using a knife.

National Film Board *Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew: Native Humour and Its Healing Powers.* 54:30 min. The National Film Board of Canada, 2000.

Northern Native Broadcasting Corporation. *Living with Mother Earth.* 25 min. Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 1995.

Obomsawin, Alanis. *No Address.* 56 min. Montréal: National Film Board of Canada, 1988.

Partners in Motion. *Vignette of Fancy Dancers.* 23 min. Harmony Entertainment Management Inc. www.partnersinmotion.com/.

Partners in Motion. *Voices in the Wind.* 25:40 min. Harmony Entertainment Management Inc.

Storyteller Productions. *Why the Rabbit Turns White.* 12 min. (plus activity guides) Filmwest Associates Distribution Ltd., 2000.

Walker, John. *Place of the Boss, Utshimassits.* 48 min. Montréal: National Film Board of Canada, 1996.

For other film resources, see the video collection of the National Film Board of Canada www.nfb.ca/.

WEB LINKS

Aboriginal Canada Portal www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/

Aboriginal Multi-Media Society www.ammsa.com/

Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada www.anac.on.ca/

Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network www.aptn.ca/

Aboriginal Soldiers www.vac-acc.gc.ca/

Arctic Circle http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/

Assembly of First Nations www.afn.ca/

Avataq Cultural Institute www.avataq.qc.ca/

Bill's Aboriginal Links www.bloorstreet.com/300block/aborl.htm

Canada's Aboriginal Digital Opportunities http://collections.ic.gc.ca/e/cado/

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples www.abo-peoples.org/

Cradleboard www.cradleboard.org/main.html

First Peoples On SchoolNet www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/e/youth_e.asp

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada www.inac-ainc.gc.ca/

Indian Claims Commission www.indianclaims.ca/

Interviews with Saskatchewan Elders www.sicc.sk.ca/elders/fabstract.html

Inuit Art Foundation www.inuitart.org/

Inuit Circumpolar Conference www.inuitcircumpolar.com/

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami www.itk.ca/

Inuit Women's Association www.pauktuutit.ca/

Library and Archives Canada www.collectionscanada.ca/aboriginal/index-e.html

Mi'kmaq Information Portal www.mikmaq.ca/

Mi'kmaq Portraits Collection http://museum.gov.ns.ca/mikmaq/index.htm

National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation www.naaf.ca/

National Aboriginal Forestry Association www.nafaforestry.org/

National Aboriginal Health Organization www.naho.ca/

National Association of Friendship Centres www.nafc.ca/

National Film Board of Canada www.nfb.ca/

Native Languages of the Americas: Preserving and Promoting American Indian Languages www.native-languages.org/

Native Links www.johnco.com/

Native Web www.nativeweb.org/

Nisga'a Nation www.nisgaalisims.ca/

Nisga'a Legends of the Nass http://collections.ic.gc.ca/

Northwest Territories, Government of www.gov.nt.ca/

Nunavut, Government of www.gov.nu.ca/

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/index_e.html

Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre www.sicc.sk.ca/

School Net www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/

The Inuit Artists Project www.ccca.ca/inuit/index.html

The Mi'kmaq Portal www.mikmaq.com/

The Mi'kmaq Resource Centre http://mrc.uccb.ns.ca/default.htm

The Saskatchewan Indian, a collection of full text articles, 1970-2003
www.sicc.sk.ca/saskindian/index.htm

Turtle Island Native Network http://turtleisland.org/

Virtual Museum Canada www.virtualmuseum.ca/

Welcome To My World of the Nisga'a Nation www.citytel.net/~nisga1/

Windspeaker (Newspaper) www.ammsa.com/windspeaker/

APPENDIX:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How old are you?

Where were you born?

When (and why) did you move here?

Who do you live with?

Describe your family a bit.

Where do you go to school?

What's a typical weekday like for you?

What's school like for you?

What do you do after school, and on weekends?

Tell me about three people who are important to you.

Describe three places you and your friends like to go to hang out.

Tell me about one of the most memorable events of your life so far.

What are some specific things you've learned about being Nisga'a (Miqmaa'q, Cree, Inuit, Mohawk)?

Is the environment important to you? Why?

Do you have any concerns about the environment?

What's an activity you do with your family?

What do you think most non-Native Canadians know about your culture/your people?

Where do non-Aboriginal people get their information about Aboriginal people from?

Do you think that there's a need to change non-Aboriginal people's perceptions of Aboriginal people?

What does self-government mean to you?

Do you think going to school is important?

What do you see yourself and your friends doing four years from now?

Do you consider yourself to be Canadian?

Do you think that the word "community" has a different meaning for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people?

What does community mean for you?

Do you consider anyone outside of your family your community?

Is there anyone in your family or community that you look up to?

Are there challenges your community is facing right now? Describe some of them.

Describe skills that a leader in your community should have.

After you finish college, do you think you'll come back to your community?

What do you see yourself doing four years from now?

Where would you take someone who's never been to your community if they came to visit?

If you could change one thing in your community, what would it be?

If you could send a message to non-Aboriginal people your age, what would it be?

How did you learn about your culture and its traditions?

Do you speak your traditional language?

Do you think it's important to speak your language?

In your community, what kinds of qualities does someone need to be considered a good person?

What kinds of things do you do that help you maintain your culture and your language?

ALSO AVAILABLE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
AGES 4 TO 7

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
AGES 8 TO 11

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
AGES 12 TO 14

WWW.AINC-INAC.GC.CA/KS/12050_E.HTML